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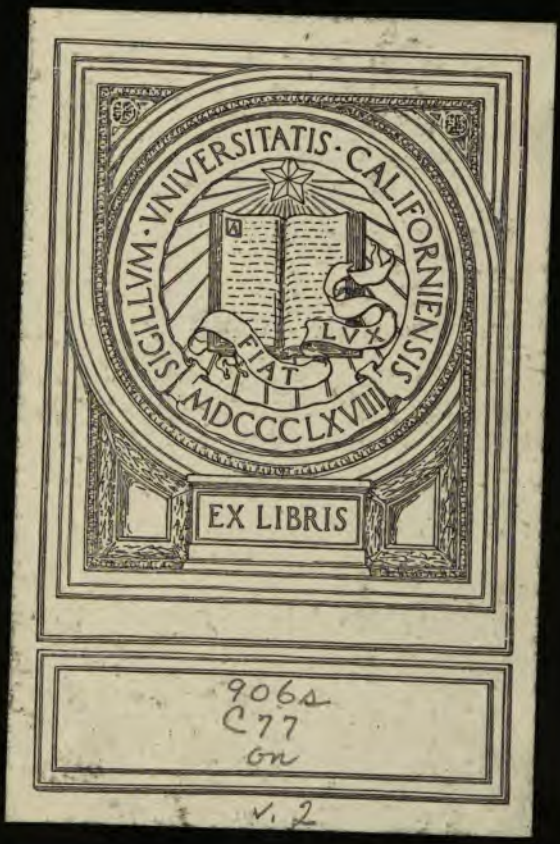
On the Stage

Dutton Cook



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ON THE STAGE.

STUDIES OF THEATRICAL HISTORY AND THE ACTOR'S ART.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

BY

DUTTON COOK,

AUTHOR OF "A BOOK OF THE PLAY," "HOURS WITH THE PLAYERS," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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ON THE STAGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CORPS DE BALLET.

CERTAIN of the children of Thespis may be described as dumb from their birth. They are scarcely his legitimate offspring, however; they are rather his children by adoption—interlopers in the theatrical family, who have yet succeeded in establishing some claim of kindred. They are not the principals, but the accessories of performance; they attend upon the histrionic cart, form its retinue, glorify it—converting it, indeed, into the triumphal car of a conqueror; but with no locutionary duties of a dramatic sort are they intrusted: efforts of declamation or recitation are not for them. They are processional and pageant figures, posturers, mimes, and dancers. They are known commonly and generically as the *corps de ballet.*

The class has its divisions and subdivisions. There are, of course, both male and female members of the ballet, although when the

ballet is spoken of it is usually in reference to its female constituents. In these later years, indeed, there has been marked decline in the importance and the popularity of the male dancer, the world in general being rather disposed to concur with the poet Southey in his expressed desire to have all male dancers *hamstrung*. They can render good service to the theatre, nevertheless, aiding its spectacles and acting in support of the *danseuses* and of the female members of the corps de ballet. While of these there are some who do nothing but dance, there are others who scarcely dance at all: there is the juvenile pupil or *rat*, as for indistinct reasons she has been called these fifty years past; and there is the *marcheuse*, an auxiliary of whom much activity is not required, but who assists the scene by some few simple movements and the mere fact of her physical presence. The ballet varies as to its numerical strength in relation to the liberality of the manager or the pretensions of his theatre; the thrifty impresario being always bent upon the small economy of "cutting down" his dancers and supernumeraries. For instance, it has been told that, after the unfavourable reception of the fine play of 'Philip Van Artevelde,' the starving Flemings who clamoured for bread in one of the chief scenes were reduced from one hundred and fifty—the number at the first performance—to seventy-five. "You

see what famine is," noted, with bitter significance, Macready, the Philip of the cast; "famine has done its work here." Half a century ago at our Haymarket opera-house the corps de ballet consisted only of sixteen men and sixteen women. This force was led, however, by three male and nine female dancers of the first and second rank. About the same time the Académie Royale at Paris was provided with thirty male and forty female dancers, in addition to a cohort of children and *rats*. But the modern fashion of crowding the stage to its utmost limits in plays of pageantry and spectacle has led to a large increase in the number of the dancers. While there has been a decided decline of ballet as that entertainment was understood in the palmy days of Taglioni and Fanny Elssler, of Cerito and Carlotta Grisi, there has all the same been a great multiplication of ballet-girls. The profession of public dancing is not adopted the less because it has fewer grand prizes than once it had to bestow upon its followers.

The *rat de l'opéra* may be fired by noble ambitions; may aspire to be a dancer of the first rank, and count upon a career of exceptional success. As a rule, however, but slender rewards are earned by her great fatigues, her incessant exertions, her long and severe apprenticeship. In theatres as distinguished from opera-houses she may, perhaps, look for advancement to what is called a

"speaking part," and gradually she may exchange her position as a dancer for the occupation of an actress. But usually the dancer remains a dancer in the receipt of a very small salary. And the hardships of her education have to be taken into account. The training must commence very early. The best dancers are those who began to learn their profession in their infancy. It is only young girls who can be ballet-dancers; young women who have been without instruction at the tenderest age can hope to be nothing beyond *marcheuses*. The pupil is often articled to the ballet-master for a term of seven years: he receives a premium for his services, or he levies a percentage upon the future earnings of his apprentice. The earlier exercises are of rather torturing character. To accustom the feet to turn outward until they form a straight line, there are prisoned heel to heel in a wooden groove or box. Then the pupil is taught to stand on one leg while extending the other until the foot rests upon a horizontal bar raised some four or five feet above the floor. These tasks, persisted in and repeated day after day, are designed to strengthen and stretch the muscles, to give suppleness to the joints, and freedom of movement to the limbs. It has been said, indeed, that stage-dancing begins with gymnastics, and that the future sylph has first to be securely bound to earth with her feet in a box. Nor can the dancer

ever dispense with these early exercises: they have to be undertaken and repeated at frequent intervals throughout her career, or she will incur certain loss of ease or of lightness. Other studies of the dancer have their technical names, but can scarcely be rendered intelligible without the walls of the classroom; such as *les jetés*, *les battements grands et petits*, *les taquetés*, *les pirouettes*, *les ballons*, *les ronds de jambes*, *les rouettes*, *les balances*, *les pointes*, *les entrechats*, *les développés*, *les grands fouettés*, *les élévations*, &c. It must not be supposed for a moment that ballet-dancing is either an idle calling or a simple art. Some few years since a scientific *maître de ballet* published a profound work upon the subject. He devoted chapters to general instructions; then to special studies of the legs, of the arms, of the body. He discoursed of the principal positions, "with their derivatives, preparations, and terminations," offering observations upon such matters as the centre of gravity in a dancer; academical, classical, and bacchanalian postures; the principal of counterpoise; the bow-legged and the cross-legged dancer; with physical remarks upon a person in the act of springing from the ground, and the different positions he may take in turning, stopping, &c.; styles in dancing, the noble and elevated, the *demi-caractère*, the pastoral and comic; difference of stature among dancers, with notes upon the measure, rhythm, and cadence

of dance-music, &c. Indeed, it may be said that the ballet-master's art can boast quite a literature of its own. Of hand-books, treatises, and essays upon the subject there is quite an abundance. M. Blasis, at one time ballet-master at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, claimed to have written a score of works dealing with the theory and practice of professional dancing.

The famous Mdlle. Taglioni owed her success as a *première danseuse* to the extreme severity of her studies under her father. M. Taglioni was, indeed, the most exacting and inflexible of professors, and compelled his pupils to toil unceasingly. "Des sueurs abondantes, d'accablantes fatigues, des larmes, rien n'attendrissait le cœur de ce père, rêvant la gloire pour un talent qui portait son nom." There was little apparent promise about the young apprentice's early efforts. During her father's absence—he was frequently engaged in the production of new ballets at various continental opera-houses—she was confided to the care of Coulon, a distinguished professor of dancing. She seemed without beauty at this time; her figure lacked grace and symmetry. "Est-ce que cette petite bossue saura jamais danser?" her class mates whispered together. Mdlle. Taglioni triumphed eventually, because she had learnt her art so completely, and because she danced after a fashion the theatres had not known before.

Her star paled a little, it may be, in the presence of the superior dramatic genius of Fanny Elssler, who possessed special gifts as a mime; but Mdlle. Taglioni, under paternal inspiration, had founded an ethereal and poetic method peculiar to herself. She has had numberless followers; but in her own select and refined mode of stage-dancing she has never been equalled. Her father had said, "Il faut que les femmes et les jeunes filles puissent te voir danser sans rougir: que ta danse soit pleine d'austérité, de délicatesse et de goût." Whereas M. Vestris, the rival professor, instructed his pupils in a very different spirit. "Mes bonnes amies, soyez charmantes, coquettes," he would say cynically; "montrez dans tous vos mouvements la plus entraînante liberté," &c. In the world behind the scenes, affectionate relations seem to exist on every side, and terms of endearment are interchanged with considerable freedom. "Le maître tutoie toutes ses élèves, grandes et petites: c'est l'usage." It may be remembered that "the sprightly gentleman with a quantity of long black hair"—the ballet-master in 'Little Dorrit'—always addressed his charges in the most caressing manner. "Now, darlings! one, two, three, four, five, six—go! Steady, darlings! one, two, three, four, five, six—go!" adding, in conclusion, "Everybody at eleven to-morrow, darlings!" Théophile Gautier has credited a Parisian ballet-master with

the following address to his pupils, rather in the manner of Vestris than of M. Taglioni: "Allons donc, les genoux arrondis, les pointes en dehors, de la souplesse; doucement, en mesure, ne sabrez pas ce passage. Aglaé, un petit sourire, montre un peu tes dents, tu les as belles; et toi là-bas, tiens ton petit doigt recoquillé quand tu allonges la main, c'est marquis, c'est grâcieux et régence; des mouvements ronds, mesdemoiselles, jamais d'angles! l'angle nous perd. Eh bien, Emilie, qu'est-ce que c'est que cela? Nous sommes raides, nous avons l'air d'un compas forcé, tu n'as pas travaillé hier, paresseuse! Diable, diable! cela te recule d'une semaine," &c.

Dr. Véron, as manager of the Paris Grand Opéra, found his early medical studies of unexpected service to him. He was required to inspect the candidates for admission to his *corps de ballet*, and to pronounce upon their qualifications. "C'était comme une solennité théâtrale," he writes. As dictator of choreography he occupied a presidential armchair with the ballet-masters seated beside him, supporting him. He decided as to the general health, constitution, temperament, proportions, "la finesse des attaches des pieds et des mains" of the *rats* seeking employment upon his stage. Many he found disqualified for success as dancers. "Il m'arrivait souvent de faire cesser les leçons à de jeunes enfants malingres, cacochymes, ressemblant à de petits vieillards,

et que cet exercice affaiblissait au lieu de les fortifier." For the *rat* needs to be possessed of much natural strength or wiriness of constitution, with complete soundness both of wind and limb. And it may be noted certain physical conditions attend upon practice of the dancer's art. The upper muscles suffer by the constant exercise and unusual development of the lower, until a certain disproportion is found to exist between the arms and legs of the ballerina. But the less weight the dancer has to carry, the more her movements gain in freedom and lightness. Enlargement of the knee and toe-joints, an excessive and unpicturesque assertion on the part of the muscles of the neck, displacement of the calf, and a certain flattening of the leg in front, form also part of the price paid by the ballet-dancer for professional success. Dr. Véron found his ballet much afflicted with chronic cold in the head, which, closing the passages of the nose, compelled them to breathe only by means of the mouth widely opened therefore, so as to render impossible the fixed smile which has been thought indispensable to the face of the stage-dancer. The doctor at one time contemplated the introduction of a probe of india-rubber into the noses of his ballet, "faire cesser cette espèce de rétrécissement des deux cavités nasales." He does not relate that he ever made his experiment, or, if made, that it had any practical result.

That the dancers catch cold is not surprising. The region behind the scenes, although it exercises a singular fascination, a curious alluring power over those who have no business there, is bleak and barren and desperately draughty, while the attire of the corps de ballet is necessarily of the lightest and slightest. A woman's life has been concisely summed up: "Elle s'habille, babille et se déshabille." And this has been found specially descriptive of the existence of the ballet-girl. She wears at intervals the dress of common life contrived as fashionably and of as costly materials as circumstances will permit; but she is clothed for many hours daily in the costumes of the theatre. At rehearsal she assumes a dress which is in part of the streets and in part of the stage: a cloth-jacket surmounts a crumpled ballet-skirt, faded fleshings, and soiled shoes. At night she appears by turns as a gipsy, a peasant, a water-nymph, a sylph, a bayadère: and she is required to effect these changes of costume with the utmost rapidity. The *première danseuse* only has a room to herself; the ballerinas dress in gangs of five or six, with one dresser to attend upon each gang. The shoes of the dancer, it may be noted, are of peculiar form; they are made to cling to the foot, and yet to allow it perfect freedom of action. With this view the sole of the shoe is made half an inch shorter than the sole of the natural foot. The

satin covering the great toe is then strengthened by being darned or sewn over, and the foot is thus free to rest upon its point. These shoes of course soon wear out, and their constant renewal is a serious expense to the ballet-girl who provides her own equipments. In Paris the dancers' shoes, supplied by the administration of the Opéra, are presumed when made of white satin to suffice for six representations; when made of flesh colour they are required to serve upon ten occasions. A dancer who is clever with her needle can, of course, cover the old satin of her shoes with new. Other articles of attire necessary to the ballet-girls' calling are "fleshing bodies," tarlatan petticoats—varying in number according to the fashion of the times or the taste and means of the wearer, but rarely less than four—and, most important of all perhaps, the tights. These vary in cost, as they are made wholly of silk, partly of silk and partly of cotton, or—as in the humbler theatres—wholly of cotton; they may thus be bought either for a few shillings or at an expense of several pounds. But they require to be frequently cleaned and their flesh colour to be revived by the use of rose-pink; while the material is not very durable and has a tendency to go into "ladders," the failure of one silk thread causing an open line to run down the entire length. Accidents from fire, if they occur more rarely than once they did, must yet be counted

among the conditions under which the dancer exercises her vocation: stage lights flare, and stage dresses are very flimsy. By the use of certain chemical solutions muslin can be deprived of its inflammability. But the material thus treated becomes rather more expensive, and is supposed moreover to forfeit something of its clearness and crispness: the dancers will have nothing to do with it.

Whence, it may be asked, come these ballet-dancers and *rats de l'opéra?* From what classes are they recruited? What manner of people are the parents who thus devote their offspring to the Minotaur of the stage? Well, the offer of a few shillings weekly will produce an almost unlimited supply of little people of very tender years to figure as elves, dwarfs, gnomes, and fairies in grand new spectacles and pantomimes. The carpenters, gasmen, scene-shifters, and other workmen attached to the theatre have, perhaps, the first opportunity of meeting the demand, and of starting their children in life by compelling them to earn something towards their own support. The infantile performers drift towards the ballet-master's classes, become his apprentices, and gradually are enrolled in the corps de ballet of the theatre. The success of certain children leads to the introduction of other children to the profession of dancing. The parents of *rats* cannot afford to be very particular, and, after all, the dancer need not be otherwise

than respectable. Things that in England are brought about in a haphazard way are, of course, in France under legislative supervision and control. The Grand Opéra is almost an official institution, and the dancing-school in connection with it is known to the mothers of the pupils as "la classe du gouvernement." It results that in France the ballet has obtained a greater prominence and significance than England has ever awarded it, while the *fille d'opéra* of Paris has become a far more distinct and typical personage than the English ballet-girl.

To the visitors behind the scenes—and there are always visitors behind the scenes—Dr. Véron tenders useful practical advice. "Ne vous approchez pas trop près des danseuses ni même des chanteuses; elles couvriraient peut-être de blanc votre habit et trahiraient ainsi vos conversations trop intimes avec elles." The fierce light that beats upon the players compels them to employ toilet artifices of a very pronounced sort. Upon the stage beauty needs to be highly accentuated: colour must be exaggerated, complexions loaded with white and red, eyebrows blackened, and dark lines drawn round the eyes and prolonged towards the temples, to represent eyelashes of prodigious length, and to impart an enlarged look to the eyes; and lips must be brightly crimsoned that the teeth may seem by contrast the

whiter. The performers are painted, like the scenes, broadly and coarsely; but *l'optique du théâtre* lends harmony and proportion to the colouring. Upon a large stage, beauty, to be effective from the point of view of the audience, should be rather robust than refined; small and delicate features, the gentler charms of expression, become insignificant and unimpressive; a really pretty woman is prettier off the stage than on it. But out of ruder materials the theatre constructs a specious beauty of its own, and thus turns the massive nose, the wide mouth, the staring eyes, to advantageous account. There is a sort of fashion in beauty, and of late years blondes have been awarded the favour and admiration formerly enjoyed by brunettes. The result has been a great demand for false flaxen tresses and increased recourse to pearl-powder on the part of the corps de ballet.

There is danger in generalising even about distinct classes, and questions concerning the state of education and morality of the corps de ballet may well therefore be approached with some hesitation. The education of our ballet-girls of the future will depend upon the activity of the School Board; at present their education is that, perhaps, of the children of the working-classes in general—the measure of education allotted to the daughters of agricultural labourers and of very small shopkeepers, to factory-hands and domestic

servants. There are ballet-girls who are extremely illiterate, while there are ballet-girls who are fairly accomplished: it being understood that Whitechapel has its corps de ballet equally with the opera-houses in the Haymarket and Covent Garden. Those members of the corps de ballet of the Grand Opéra, who are said to spell well, to play the piano, to know English, to read Madame de Sévigné, Rousseau, and Chateaubriand, "et qui ont du style," may be viewed as exceptional cases; but instances may be found of English ballet-girls possessed of education far in advance of their station in life. For it must be remembered that, although they are often splendidly attired and prominently presented under a grand glare of gas, their station is really one of exceeding humbleness. They are not to be considered as dramatic artists; they but pertain to the fringe of the histrionic profession; they are merely the living furniture of the stage, receiving for their simple services the scantiest wages. But no doubt a spurious importance attaches to them because of the admiration they excite in the bosoms of the Edmund Sparklers of society, while a certain class of fatuous elderly gentlemen have always distinguished themselves as the idolisers of the corps de ballet.

Mrs. Merdle, it may be remembered, said of her son that he was three-and-twenty, a

little gay—"a thing society is accustomed to in young men"—and very impressible; she pronounced, moreover, that the stage had a fascination for young men of that class of character, while she confessed that in saying the stage she meant "the people on it of the female sex." She proceeded, "When I heard, therefore, that my son was supposed to be fascinated by a dancer, I knew what that usually meant in society, and confided in her being a dancer at the opera, where young men moving in society are usually fascinated." When the morality of the corps de ballet is under consideration it may be well to take into account the facility with which the young men moving in society permit themselves to be fascinated by the dancers. Mr. Sparkler's advances being checked by Miss Fanny Dorrit in an unexpected manner, he was brought to the point of proposing marriage; other Sparklers have proceeded in like manner, and found wives among the corps de ballet. "Advances" are not always checked, however; every dancer is not a Miss Fanny Dorrit; and thus the virtue of the corps de ballet, in this respect resembling the virtue of other people, suffers in proportion to the temptations it undergoes. Unfortunately it happens that the dancers are peculiarly exposed to "advances," while there is much in the exercise of their profession likely to inflame personal vanity, and induce a love

of even the grossest forms of admiration and flattery. The dancer's profession does not necessarily tend toward vice, however, while the virtue of industry is inseparable from it: let it be repeated that there can be no stage dancing without the most constant attention, study, and practice. It would be absurd to say that all dancers are vicious; it would be untrue to say that all dancers are virtuous. But what is true of their educational state is true also of their moral condition. A certain discount being allowed for the blandishments and enticements to which their profession and the follies of fashion render them liable, their morality will probably compare with the morality of their social compeers—to be looked for, as already stated, rather low down in the world's grades. It may be added that our English corps de ballet numbers in its ranks many married women of respectable character. For the Columbines of the theatre are apt to marry early in life—not always the Harlequins, be it understood: they find husbands sometimes in the orchestra, or among the minor players; occasionally they mate with the workmen or artificers of the establishment. The children of Thespis—like the children of Israel for that matter—are much disposed to intermarrying, or "breeding-in" as trainers call it, though at times they unite themselves to aliens in race, strangers within the gates, or "non-professionals."

CHAPTER II.

THE DUKE'S BURLESQUE.

"THE old plays begin to disgust this refined age since his Majesty's being so long abroad," noted Evelyn in 1662. He had just returned from a representation of 'Hamlet' at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. The court had probably been present, but had regarded the performance with apathy and listlessness, albeit the great Mr. Betterton had been an actor in the tragedy. King Charles, it had become manifest, was taken with a taste for the theatrical fashions of France. The Restoration had reopened the play-houses, but a swarm of very worthless works had forthwith occupied the stage: just as when on certain great festivals the populace are admitted to the theatres, pell-mell, without payment or question, the best places are immediately secured by the most unseemly and unsavoury visitors. The dramatist, rejoicing in the novelty of emancipation, had become licentious almost upon principle: by way of protesting against and avenging themselves

upon the puritanical tyranny which had so long fettered and silenced them. The play-goers were in the position of hungry men, more avid than nice; careless what manner of provender was set before them, so that their appetite for histrionic entertainments was in some way appeased. The stage had abandoned its old instructive, educational position, and was content with simply diverting, by any means, and at any price. The Comic Muse was gambolling in the gutter, soiling her socks with mire. Melpomene, in fantastically-embroidered buskins, had mounted upon stilts; she permitted herself the most extravagant airs, and declaimed in doggerel. To please the King, Lord Orrery had introduced the rhyming tragedies of the French; and Dryden had been servilely prompt in following suit, and deferring to the royal whim. Moreover recourse had become frequent to scenic appliances and stage mechanism, to levities of dance and song, such as greatly scandalized the more conservative and sober minded of the play-goers, who proceeded to raise a cry, never since wholly stilled, proclaiming the decline of the drama. And a new condition of things, that should have exercised a salutary and purifying influence upon the theatre, was attended by a directly contrary result. Actresses now for the first time in England trod the boards. Yet the works of the earlier dramatists, the

heroines of which had been personated by boys or by young men of effeminate aspect, were seen to be propriety itself, in comparison with the plays of the Restoration that were supported by women performers. It is not to be wondered at that the ladies visiting the theatre "were then observed to be decently afraid of venturing bare-faced to a new comedy till they had been assured they might do it without the risk of an insult to their modesty; or if their curiosity were too strong for their patience, they took care at least to save appearances, and rarely came upon the first days of acting but in masks."* As for the actresses who had to speak and shock, rather than to listen and be shocked, and to whom masks could not be permitted, they must needs have painted an inch thick to hide their blushes—supposing them to have been liable to such demonstrations of outraged feeling—when required to represent the shameless hussies who figure as heroines in the Restoration comedies. The social prejudices which so long weighed heavily upon women players had a reasonable foundation, the nature of their first performances being duly considered.

It is certainly curious to find a protest against the vitiation of the public taste proceeding from so irredeemable a profligate as George Villiers, the second Duke of Bucking-

* Colley Cibber.

ham; still more curious perhaps to find the protest effecting permanent good results, and securing great reforms of the errors and abuses against which it was directed. But Buckingham, with all his corruption and infamy—heartless, treacherous, unscrupulous, and malignant as he was—nevertheless possessed unquestionable abilities, literary tastes and judgment, and an admirable wit. And then he had private piques and animosities to serve. If he pilloried the playwrights and poets of his time, it was quite as much because he had personal reasons for finding pleasure in the spectacle of their sufferings as because he held in reprobation the offences which had rendered them obnoxious to punishment.

In the production of the comedy of 'The Rehearsal,' Buckingham was said to have been assisted by the author of 'Hudibras,' by Martin Clifford, of the Charter House, and by his own chaplain, Dr. Sprat, the friend of Cowley, afterwards Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster. The play was commenced in 1663, and was ready for representation in 1665. It had been several times rehearsed, and the players were perfect in their parts; but the performance was then prevented by the closing of the theatres, on account of the Great Plague. It was not really produced until 1671. Dryden and his friends found matter for ridicule in the length of time and the number of hands em-

ployed upon the work; and Dr. Johnson observes of it, that "though by some artifice of action it yet keeps possession of the stage, it is not possible to find anything [in it] that might not have been written without so long delay, or a confederacy so numerous."

It is to be presumed that the play was kept back for nearly nine years rather by accident than in compliance with Horatian counsel in that respect. In the interval, however, great changes were made in it, and even after publication various modifications and additions appear in the subsequent issues. It had been originally intended that the hero of 'The Rehearsal' should be called *Bilboa*, by which name Sir Robert Howard was understood to be alluded to. Sir Robert was Dryden's brother-in-law, and his play of the 'Indian Queen,'* written in conjunction with Dryden, and the 'Committee,'† had been very favourably received by the town. The arrogance of his manners had led to his being caricatured as *Sir Positive Atall*, by Shadwell,

* "1664. February 5th.—I saw the 'Indian Queen' acted, a tragedy, well written, so beautiful with rich scenes as the like had never been seen here, or haply (except rarely) elsewhere on a mercenary theatre."—EVELYN.

"1664. February 1st—To the King's Theatre, and there saw the 'Indian Queen' acted, which, indeed, is a most pleasant show, and beyond my expectation; the play good, but spoiled with the rhyme, which breaks the sense."—PEPYS.

Mr. Pepys notes also that "the King commends the 'Indian Queen' for a very fine thing."

† "1662. November 27th.—At night saw acted 'The Com-

in his comedy of 'The Sullen Lovers, or The Impertinents.' It is clear, however, that Sir William Davenant, the Poet Laureate, is referred to in several passages of 'The Rehearsal.' But Davenant died in 1668, and *Bayes*, as the chief character was finally called, was then designed mainly to satirise Dryden, who had succeeded to the office of Laureate. As Johnson suggests, "the design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be." Change of plan had become necessary by the delay which had occurred in bringing the play upon the stage; but it was not worth while to remove all trace of the original aim of the caricaturist.

The framework of the play was closely imitated by Sheridan in 'The Critic, or a Tragedy Rehearsed,' although at the time of the production of that famous comedy, and indeed, for many years afterwards, the 'Rehearsal' was still one of the stock entertainments of the stage. In the opening scene there occurs a conversation between one *Johnson*, a London gentleman, and his friend *Smith*, who is fresh from the country. They discuss

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mittee,' a ridiculous play by Sir R. Howard, where the mimic Lacy acted the Irish footman to admiration."—EVELYN.

"1667. August 13th.—Sir. W. Pen and I to the King's House, and there saw, 'The Committee,' which I went to with some prejudice, not liking it before, but I do now find it a very good play and a great deal of good invention in it: but Lacy's part is so well performed that it would set off anything."—PEPYS.

'The Committee' kept possession of the stage down to the close of the last century.

the doings of the town and the character of the modern plays and playwrights. *Johnson* declares that such hideous things are done in the theatres, he is tempted to forswear the stage altogether, and apply himself "to the solid nonsense of your men of business, as the more ingenious pastime." He describes "the new kind of wits"—"your virtuosi, your civil persons, your drolls: fellows that scorn to imitate nature, but are given to elevate and surprise—a phrase they have got amongst them to express their no meaning by—fighting, loving, sleeping, rhyming, dying, dancing, singing, crying, and everything but reason and sense."

Mr. Bayes, who is known to *Johnson*, then enters. He is a dramatic poet, and has in his pocket a new play, of which he is very proud. "It shall," he ventures to say, "read and write, and act, and plot, and show, ay, and pit, box, and gallery, egad, with any play in Europe." This vaunt was understood to have been actually uttered by the Hon. Edward Howard, another of Dryden's brothers-in-law, and also a dramatist. *Mr. Bayes*, then, in ridiculous terms enough, explains his method of composition. He keeps a book of dramatic commonplaces,* to be made available on all

* *Sir Fretful Plagiary.* Well, and pray now—not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say?

Sneer. Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention or original genius whatever, though you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

occasions; he has a plan of adapting and appropriating the works of other writers, which he thus explains: "I take a book in my hand either at home or elsewhere, for that's all one. If there be any wit in it, as there is no book but has some, I *transverse* it: that is, if it be prose, put it into verse—(but that takes up some time) and if it be verse, put it into prose." (*Johnson* suggests that this should be called *transposing*, and *Bayes* greatly approves the notion). In this way he claims to make the book his own—"'tis so changed that no man can know it." Further, he has a habit of attending the coffee-houses where the wits resort: "I make as if I minded nothing, do you mark?—but as soon as any one speaks, pop, I slap it down, and I make that too my own." Subsequently *Johnson* and *Smith* attend *Mr. Bayes* to the rehearsal of his new tragedy.

The poet informs his companions that he has "printed above a hundred sheets of paper to insinuate the plot into the boxes." This was recognised as an allusion to an advertisement Dryden had distributed, informing the

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Sir Fretful. Ha! ha! ha! Very good.

Sneer. That, as to comedy, you have not one idea of your own, he believes, even in your commonplace book—where stray jokes and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the lost and stolen office.

Sir Fretful. Ha! ha! ha! Very pleasant.

Sneer. Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to steal with taste," &c.—THE CRITIC.

public that his 'Indian Emperor' was a sequel to the play of 'The Indian Queen.' At the theatre the actors are found to be in a state of bewilderment concerning the characters they are to represent. "I can't guess for my life what humour I'm to be in," says one player, "whether angry, melancholy, merry, or in love. I don't know what to make on't." "You must know," explains another comedian, "this is the new way of writing, and these hard things please forty times better than the old plain way. . . . And then for scenes, clothes, and dances, we put quite down all that ever went before us,—and those are the things, you know, that are essential to a play." "I'm not of thy mind; but so it gets us money 'tis no great matter," replies the first speaker, philosophically.

In the first act, before the rehearsal commences, is introduced the well-known parody, beginning:—

> "So boar and sow, when any storm is nigh,
> Snuff up and smell it gathering in the sky:
> Boar beckons sow to trot in chestnut groves," &c.

The critics rejoiced greatly in this close following and mocking of Dryden's lines in 'The Conquest of Granada:'—

> "So two kind turtles, when a storm is nigh,
> Look up, and see it gathering in the sky;
> Each calls his mate to shelter in the groves," &c.

In the rehearsed play there is no attempt at coherence of plot or intelligible sequence

of scenes. Indeed, one of the avowed objects of the work was to caricature the unmeaningness and incongruity which characterised the successful dramas of the period. Thus the epilogue begins :—

> "The play is at an end—but where's the plot?
> That circumstance our poet, Bayes, forgot.
> And we can boast, though 'tis a plotting age,
> No place is freer from it than the stage."

and concludes :—

> "Let's have at least, once in our lives, a time
> When we may hear some reason—not all rhyme.
> We have this ten years felt its influence,
> Pray let this prove a year of prose and sense." *

Smith, puzzling over the rehearsed play, charges *Bayes* with beginning and ending it without ever opening the plot at all. "I do so," *Bayes* replies; "that's the very plain truth of it. If they cannot find it out themselves, e'en let 'em alone, for Bayes, I warrant you." At another time *Smith* complains that the plot is standing still. "Plot stands still!" cries *Bayes*. "Why what a devil is the plot good for but to bring in fine things?"

The play opens in the court of the two kings of Brentford. "Brentford," the author explains—"for I love to write familiarly." In the two kings the audience enjoyed an allusion to Charles II. and the Duke of York.

* Plays in rhyme, however, were not totally banished from the stage until about 1706.

It was urged, however, that the two kings, *Boabdelin* and *Abdalla*, in Dryden's 'Conquest of Granada,' were rather pointed at, or the rival monarchs in the Hon. Henry Howard's 'United Kingdoms.'—an unsuccessful play, in which a grand funeral was introduced—room for a funeral being also found in *Mr. Bayes*' tragedy. A *Gentleman Usher* and a *Physician* of the court commence the drama in a dialogue carried on, for the most part in whispers, unheard by the audience, "because they are supposed to be politicians, and matters of state ought not to be divulged." Each states to the other his particular vocation, and they embrace. "How comes it to pass," *Johnson* inquires of the author, "that they know one another no better?" "Phoo!" says *Bayes*, "that's for the better carrying on of the plot." *Smith* asks why the *Physician* says, "to conclude," when he has but just commenced to speak? "You must know that they had been talking of this a pretty while without." "Where? in the tiring room?" "Where! Ay, sir! He's so dull!" *

The two kings enter. They make use of French words and address each other familiarly, "to show their good breeding and

* *Puff.* If people who want to listen or overhear were not always connived at in tragedy, there would be no carrying on any plot in the world.

* * * * *

Dangle. What! they had been talking before?

Puff. Oh, yes; all the way as they came along."—THE CRITIC.

that they are of equal rank," * and then retire. *Prince Prettyman* is introduced, who, upon the entrance of *Cloris*, is so overcome by his love for her that he falls asleep. As *Mr. Bayes* explains: "His spirits exhale with the heat of his passion and all that, and swop, he falls asleep, as you see. Now here she must make a simile." "Where's the necessity of that?" *Smith* demands. "Because she's surprised. That's a general rule; you must ever make a simile when you're surprised; 'tis the new way of writing."

Cloris' simile is as follows:—

"As some tall pine which we on Etna find
To have stood the rage of many a boisterous wind,
Feeling without that flames within do play,
Which would consume his root and sap away;
He spreads his worsted arms unto the skies,
Silently grieves, all pale, repines, and dies:
So shrouded up, your bright eye disappears,
Break forth, bright, scorching sun, and dry my tears."

A parody on the lines in Dryden's 'Conquest of Granada:'—

"As some fair tulip, by a storm opprest,
Shrinks up and folds its silken arms to rest;
And, bending to the blast, all pale and dead,
Hears from within the wind sing round its head:
So, shrouded up, your beauty disappears;
Unveil my love, and lay aside your fears,
The storm that caused your fright is dead and gone."

Johnson, not unreasonably, complains that the simile wants application. *Bayes* defends

* "*Puff.* He calls him by his Christian name, to show they are on the most familiar terms."—THE CRITIC.

it. "No, faith; for it alludes to passion, to consuming, to dying, and all that; which you know are the natural effects of an amour. But I'm afraid," he continues, "this scene has made you sad; for I must confess when I writ it, I wept myself." *Smith* avows, however, that his spirits, like *Prince Prettyman's*, are almost "exhaled," that he is more likely to fall asleep than to shed tears.

The two kings are deposed by the *Usher* and *Physician*. Thereupon follows a wild whirl of incidents of a wholly inconsequential and preposterous kind. The *dramatis personæ* appear and disappear, scene follows scene, after an elaborately nonsensical fashion. There is a lady designated *Amaryllis*—because she wears armour—"a pretty conceit" of *Mr. Bayes'*—and another damsel named *Parthenope*. In addition to *Prince Prettyman* there is a *Prince Volscius*; while a swaggering hero, known as *Drawcansir*, rhodomontades like Ancient Pistol, and frets and fumes at intervals upon the stage. There are many dances;—in one of which *Mr. Bayes* takes part, but falls and so injures his nose, that he appears afterwards with a patch of brown paper on his face, by way of burlesque of Davenant's well-known disfigurement; — a funeral procession; — a grand banquet — at which *Pallas* unexpectedly appears, pouring wine from her lance, producing a pie from her helmet, and transforming her buckler into

a cheese;—a complicated battle, and a simpler duel, in which the combatants, by turns, play the lute and fence together. At last the play becomes a kind of masque, and the two kings are discovered sitting in the clouds, singing, robed in white, with three fiddlers in garments of green ranged in front of them. The rehearsal does not proceed beyond the fourth act. The players abandon the performance in despair. One of them reads from a stray piece of paper the argument of the fifth act. "*Cloris*, at length, being sensible of *Prince Prettyman's* passion, consents to marry him; but just as they are going to church, *Prince Prettyman*, meeting by chance with *Old Joan*, the chandler's widow, and remembering it was she that first brought him acquainted with *Cloris*, out of a high point of honour breaks off his match with *Cloris* and marries *Old Joan*. Upon this, *Cloris*, in despair, drowns herself, and *Prince Prettyman* discontentedly walks by the river side." "This will never do," cry the actors in chorus. "'Tis just like the rest. Plague on it! let's go to dinner." *Johnson* and *Smith* have already stealthily taken their departure. Finally, *Bayes* is left alone upon the stage in a fury of indignation, denouncing his friends, the actors, and the town; declaring that, henceforward, he will for ever abandon the drama and take to satire; and the curtain falls.

It is to be noted that for all the extrava-

gancies of the 'Rehearsal'* warrant and precedents were to be found in works then extant and enjoying public favour. The language of the Duke's burlesque was a sort of tessellation of parodies. The passages caricatured occurred in a number of plays that have long since been justly consigned to oblivion. Only a very hardy and curious reader would now think of turning for entertainment to such dramas as Davenant's 'Love and Honour,' or the 'Siege of Rhodes;' to Killigrew's 'Pandora;' Mrs. Behn's 'Amorous Prince;' or even to the ranting, rhyming tragedies of "glorious" Dryden. Yet a score of such plays are made to contribute matter for mirth to the 'Rehearsal.' It is difficult to believe, however, that the audience of the time could have fully recognised all the intricate allusions of the burlesque, or appreciated the pains that had been taken to make the parodies complete. Indeed, it was found necessary to publish 'A Key to the Rehearsal; or, a Critical view of the Authors and their Writings that are exposed in that celebrated Play.' One weak point of the work, even in its own time, must have consisted in the fact that it deals in caricature of matters that are themselves caricatures, and sufficiently demonstrate their own monstrosity.

* Evelyn calls it 'The Recital:'—"1672. December 14.—Went to see the Duke of Buckingham's ridiculous farce, 'The Recital,' buffooning all plays, yet profane enough."

It was hardly possible to be more preposterous than the playwrights of the time had become. They were already so ridiculous that the satirist's work was, as it were, done for him beforehand.

What kept the 'Rehearsal' so long upon the stage was probably, therefore, the general humour of the work—quite apart from what may be called its moral purpose—and the fun and frolic in which the actors appearing in it were permitted to indulge. Yet this failed to secure for it lasting vitality. The wonder is, perhaps, that it endured so long as it did. And then the appearance of Sheridan's 'Critic' was a sufficient reason for the gradual ejection from the theatre of the elder work.

It may be questioned whether Sheridan's satire was fettered by regard for any particular plays. Yet it is worth noting that tragedies dealing with subjects very similar to the materials of Mr. Puff's production had long occupied the stage. The court of Queen Elizabeth had figured in plays by Brook, Jones, Ralph, and Banks. In 'The Unhappy Favourite; or, the Earl of Essex,' by the last-named dramatist, occurs a description of the defeat of the Armada, quite extravagant enough in its terms to have proceeded from the pen of Mr. Puff himself:—

"Long live that day, and never be forgotten
The gallant hour, when, to th' immortal fame
Of England, and the more immortal Drake,
That proud Armada was destroyed! Yet was
The fight not half so dreadful as the event

Was pleasant. When the first broadsides were given,
A tall, brave ship, the tallest of the rest,
That seemed the pride of all their big half-moon,
Whether by chance, or by a lucky shot
From us, I know not, but she was blown up,
Bursting like thunder, and almost as high,
And then did shiver in a thousand pieces;
Whilst from her belly crowds of living creatures,
Broke like untimely births, and filled the sky.
Then might be seen a Spaniard catch his fellow,
And wrestling in the air fall down together;
A priest for safety riding on a cross,
Another that had none, crossing himself;
Friars with long big sleeves, like magpie's wings,
That bore them up, came gently sailing down;
One with a Don that held him by the arms,
And cried 'Confess me straight;' but as he just
Had spoken the words, they tumbled down together." &c.

Yet Sheridan proposed, probably in a general way, to raise a laugh at a conventional kind of tragedy that had obtained a place in the public esteem, and to ridicule various tricks that had become traditions of the stage. Of late years, tragedy, of whatever kind, has departed almost altogether from the modern theatre, and burlesque of it has therefore lost significance. Yet the 'Critic' will doubtless enjoy occasional representation, so long, at least, as an actor is forthcoming who can do any degree of justice to the part of *Puff*. And then the 'Critic' was not aimed solely at the absurdities and follies of the drama; it was also an exposure of, and a satire upon, the arts of puffing—and puffing is still extant among us, and gives little promise of speedy dissolution. The 'Critic' will probably live on the strength of its first act even when the rehearsed tragedy shall have

ceased to divert or to have any reference to an existing condition of things. That the comedy is accepted generally, not merely as a picture of the past, reflecting in no way the follies of the present, may be judged from the fact that the actors appearing in it—and it has been performed quite recently—always wear modern dress, instead of assuming the costumes of 1779, the year of its first performance. This would hardly be possible with any other play of the last century; for, with all its errors and defects, the modern stage is tolerably heedful about appropriateness of costume.

That Sheridan was greatly indebted to the 'Rehearsal' is indisputable. The reader must have already noted many close resemblances between the two works. Not only is the ground-plan of the 'Critic' borrowed from the Duke's play, but the incidents and dialogue are often followed with an accuracy that cannot possibly be attributed to mere accident. It is evident that the 'Critic' was written with a copy of the 'Rehearsal' at the writer's elbow. Certain of the passages in the two plays we may pause a moment to compare.

When *Puff* * says,

"The *pro* and *con* goes as fast as hits in a fencing match. It is, indeed, a sort of small-sword logic, which we have borrowed from the French. . . . There you see she threw in *Tilburnia!* Quick, parry carte with *England!* Ha! thrust in tierce a *title!* parried by *honour*," &c.

* A character called *Puff*, by-the-bye, had already appeared upon the stage in Foote's comedies of 'Taste' and 'The Patron.'

he was clearly imitating *Bayes'* speech.

"You shall see 'em come in upon one another, snip-snap—hit for hit, as fast as can be. First one speaks—then presently t'other's upon him slap with a repartee; then he's at him again, dash with a new conceit, and so eternally," &c.

"I wouldn't have you too sure that he is a beef-eater," says *Mr. Puff*. "Perhaps you may find, too, for all this that she's not dead neither," says *Mr. Bayes*.

The *Son* in the 'Critic' states,

"My father dwelt in Rochester, and was,
As I have heard—a fishmonger—no more."

Prince Prettyman, in the 'Rehearsal,' cries, "Bring in my father! Why d'ye keep him from me? Although a fisherman, he is my father." "Figurative," observes *Puff*, commenting upon his dialogue. "Simile!" says *Bayes*, engaged in a like task. "That antithesis of persons is a most established figure," notes *Mr. Dangle*. "Antithesis! Thine and mine," *Bayes* points out. *Puff* asks the characters if they can't "go off kneeling." *Prince Volscius* is made to go off hopping. "How am I to get off here?" asks the confidant. "You? Pshaw!" *Puff* replies. "What the devil signifies how you get off? Edge away at the top, or where you will." "How shall all these dead men go off?" inquires *Smith*. "Go off? why, as they came in—upon their legs," *Bayes* answers. "I'll show you how they shall go off. Rise, rise, sirs, and go about your busi-

ness." Even *Lord Burleigh's* famous shake of his head, "because he has all the affairs of the nation on his mind, and has no time to talk," may owe something of its origin to the conversation in whispers of the *Usher* and *Physician*, "because they are politicians, and matters of State ought not to be divulged."

The original representation of *Bayes* was John Lacy, a comedian of great repute in his day, of whom Langbaine says, "I am apt to believe that as this age never had, so the next never will have, his equal, at least not his superior." He had been a dancing-master, had held a lieutenant's commission in the army, and he instructed Nell Gwynne in the art of acting. His portrait was painted by command of Charles II. in three of his favourite characters, and may still be found at Windsor Castle. He was described as "of a rare shape of body and of a good complexion." * He was the author of three or four comedies, one of which came upon the stage three years after his death. Durfey supplied a prologue, bespeaking the indulgence of the audience, and concluding with the lines—

> "And if it takes not, all that we can say on't
> Is,—we've his fiddle, not his hands to play on't."

Lacy was required to imitate Dryden in

* Dryden, however, was of low stature and thickset. Hence he was called *Poet Squab* by Rochester, and *Little Bayes* by Tom Brown.

aspect and manner as closely as possible; and the Duke of Buckingham took great pains to perfect him in the part. Dryden was fond of wearing a black velvet coat, took snuff constantly, ejaculated "egad," and was given to much anxious gesticulation in instructing the players as to the performance of his tragedies. These peculiarities were no doubt borne in mind by the actor. It is said that Dryden was induced by Buckingham and the Earl of Dorset to accompany them to the theatre on the first performance of the comedy, and occupied a seat between the two noblemen. The laureate "put the best face upon the matter, and endeavoured to laugh at the grotesque picture of himself." That he felt the riducule acutely, however, can hardly be doubted. He took his revenge subsequently in portraying the duke as *Zimri*, in 'Absalom and Achitophel.' But this return blow was judiciously withheld until the duke had ceased to be a royal favourite. The poem was not published until 1681—ten years after the production of the 'Rehearsal.'

Lacy was followed in the part of *Bayes* by a gross comedian known as Joe Haynes. He became a Roman Catholic, but he spoke on one occasion a "recantation prologue," written by Tom Brown, and presented himself to the audience in a white sheet, with a burning taper in his hand, upon his admittance to the playhouse after his return to the Established

Church. The next famous *Bayes* was Dick Estcourt, the friend of Addison, Steele, and Parnell, who honoured the actor under the name of "Jocus" in a Bacchanalian poem. "Estcourt," says Davies, "was a remarkable genius, celebrated for ready wit, gay pleasantry, and a wonderful talent in mimicry." He was a favourite of the great Duke of Marlborough—"those," notes his biographer, "who know his Grace's character will not be surprised that he did not improve his fortunes by that distinction"—he was the providore of the Beefsteak Club, wearing a gridiron of gold suspended from his neck by a green silk ribbon, and towards the close of his career he became landlord of the Bumper Tavern in Covent Garden. Steele devoted the whole of the 'Spectator,' No. 468, to reflections upon the death and character of Dick Estcourt, and concludes, "I wish it were any honour to the pleasant creature's memory that my eyes are too much suffused to let me go on."

After the stage had lost Estcourt, Colley Cibber, who had theretofore been content to play *Prince Volscius*, was promoted to the part of *Bayes*. Cibber wore a smart, coxcombical dress, in imitation, it was said, of Tom Durfey, and in the course of the performance was so unwise as to venture a satirical reflection upon Pope, to whom, in conjunction with Gay and Arbuthnot, had lately been assigned the authorship of the poor farce

'Three Hours after Marriage.' How Pope retaliated need not here be related. Gay, who considered himself included in the affront, was stated to have resented it "in something more feeling than words."

It had for some time been evident that the 'Rehearsal' was fast losing its original significance, and becoming a mere vehicle for mimicry and buffoonery; it was no longer recognised as an attack upon authors, and was now made available as a means of satirising actors and of winning laughter from the town at any price. It was understood that *Bayes* was at liberty "to gag," as the actors call it, very freely indeed. Theophilus Cibber, who next assumed the part, diverted his public by introducing into the drama "hobby horses and other novelties, with some fresh jokes upon the actors." The burlesque was rapidly being perverted into a pantomime. Still a run of three weeks was secured for the representation—something to marvel at in those days. Young Cibber, however, was condemned by the judicious for the extravagance, grimace, and "false spirit" of his acting.

The part of *Bayes* was presently to acquire new fame in the hands of Garrick. He undertook the character during his first season in London at the theatre in Goodman's Fields. There was no Dryden, or Davenant, or Durfey now to mock, and he aimed at no precise portrait-painting therefore. He wore at first

a gay and handsome dress; but it afterwards occurred to him that *Bayes* should not appear in too affluent circumstances, and he substituted "a shabby, old-fashioned coat that had formerly been very fine, a little hat, a large, flowing, brown wig, high-topt shoes with red heels, a mourning sword, scarlet stockings, and cut-fingered gloves." His demeanour was very solemn and earnest, and though he excited his audience to great mirth, he was never himself moved to laughter. He was credited with a desire to correct the errors of his time, and to enforce the merits of his own school of acting —"the true theatrical manner," as he termed it. He selected for imitation certain of the more famous actors of the day, and mimicked in turn the peculiarities of speech and style of each. Quin, it was noticed, he refrained from mocking. He either respected too much the merits of that performer, or was too prudent just then to enter the lists against him. But of Delane, who ranked next to Quin in the profession, he effected an elaborate caricature. He retired to the back of the stage, and drawing his left arm across his breast, rested his right elbow on it, raising a finger to his nose, and then came forward with a stately air, nodding his head as he advanced, and in the exact tones of Delane spoke the famous simile, "So boar and sow," &c. Next he burlesqued the soft, plaintive accents of Hale, who played the lovers at Covent Garden, and was thought

to be without a rival in the tender and pathetic. Ryan, a veteran actor, who had been included in the original cast of Addison's 'Cato,' was next chosen for imitation, and certain speeches were delivered in the croaking, drawling, tremulous tones for which he was well known. Mimicry of other actors followed, including Giffard, the manager of the theatre, who was said to have challenged Garrick to fight a duel in consequence. Indeed the story goes that a contest actually took place, and that Garrick was wounded in the sword-arm. This seems to be very improbable, however, especially as Garrick's performances were continued uninterruptedly throughout the season.

The actor's success in *Bayes* was undoubtedly very great. He appears to have played the part oftener than any other at Goodman's Fields, and on his removal to Drury Lane *Bayes* was the second character he undertook, *Chamont*, in the 'Orphan,' being the first. By-and-by, yielding to the advice of his friends and the remonstrances of the actors, and convinced that his fame needed no further help from a source so undignified as mere mimicry, he abandoned the part altogether. It was remarked at the time that there was little generosity in his giving up what he no longer wanted; and when he afterwards found himself imitated by Tate Wilkinson and Henderson, and was exceedingly angry with

their presumption in that respect, it was thought he might have called to mind the caricatures of his playfellows with which he had entertained the town in the early part of his career.

Among the freaks of the playhouse to which the 'Rehearsal' has been subjected it may be mentioned that *Bayes* was at one time represented by the beautiful Mrs. Mountford —who was also known as Mrs. Percival and Mrs. Verbruggen—and at a later date by Mrs. Clive, Horace Walpole's great crony and neighbour. Mrs. Clive, moreover, wrote a farce for her benefit, called 'Bayes in Petticoats,' an adaptation from the French of Marivaux.

In the hands of Foote the 'Rehearsal' was made to deviate more than ever from its original purpose. "It was," as Davies says, "an odd mixture of himself and the Duke of Buckingham: the old building was new-faced with a modern front." The play was treated as the groundwork of an entertainment, in which the chief performer, who was at once a wit, a mimic, a satirist, and a buffoon, was at liberty to indulge in the most exuberant antics. The audience were kept in continual laughter. "Public transactions, the flying follies of the day, debates of grave assemblies, absurdities of playwrights, politicians, and players, all came under his cognizance, and all felt the force of his wit; in short, he laid hold of

everything and everybody that could furnish merriment for the evening." Yet no one thought of condemning Foote for thus dealing with the play. It was felt generally that Foote, had he been so disposed, could have written a new 'Rehearsal' equal to the old; and then the original work had clearly seen its best days.

Other performers of *Bayes* have been Shuter, King, Tate Wilkinson, and Henderson. In 1785, at Covent Garden, the comedy was reduced to three acts. In 1819, at the same theatre, the 'Rehearsal' was played as a farce in one act, the late William Farren appearing as *Bayes*, Liston as *Prince Volscius*, and Blanchard as *Prince Prettyman*. There has been no later representation of the Duke's burlesque. Its revival in the future is hardly to be expected, and indeed not to be desired; but its story may be regarded altogether as a curious chapter in the chronicles of the stage.

It may be noted that a careful reproduction of the first edition of the 'Rehearsal' has been lately added to Mr. Arber's neat series of 'English Reprints.'

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING HARLEQUIN AND COMPANY.

WHEN did harlequin first step upon our stage? Did Shakespeare ever see a harlequin?

An opinion has long prevailed that harlequin first presented himself in a London theatre when Edward Ravenscroft, a small dramatist and compiler of plays, flourishing during the reigns of Charles II. and his two successors, produced his so-called comedy in five acts, bearing the cumbrous title of 'Scaramouch, a Philosopher, Harlequin, a Schoolboy, Bravo, Merchant and Magician.' This was at the Theatre Royal, in 1677. Much of the play was borrowed from Molière; 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme,' 'Le Mariage Forcé,' and 'Les Fourberies de Scapin,' being all laid under contribution; but the scenes in which harlequin figured were derived apparently from an Italian original, possibly with the help of a French translation. Harlequin was, of course, the old-fashioned comic-speaking character, and was represented by the popular low comedian

Joe Haynes; Scaramouch was played by Griffin; Pancrace, by Powell; Plautino, by Goodman; and Aurelia, the columbine of the story, by a Mrs. Vincent. In his prologue, Ravenscroft complained that, owing to the dilatoriness of his actors, his play had been forestalled by the production at the Dorset Garden Theatre of Otway's rival version of 'The Cheats of Scapin,' and then proceeded to show that his undertaking was of a kind new to the theatre:

> The poet does a dangerous trial make,
> And all the common roads of plays forsake.
> Upon the actors it depends too much;
> For who can ever hope to see two such
> As the famed Harlequin and Scaramouch?

At the same time he did not pretend to be an inventor, and scarcely deserved to be contemned by Langbaine as "but a dwarf drest up in a giant's coat stuffed out with straw," and "rather the midwife than the parent of the play," in that he could not "justly challenge any part of a scene as the genuine offspring of his own brain." His prologue concluded with the triplet:

> Like but the play, let others have the name,
> Let both French and Italians share the fame,
> But if't be bad, let them too bear the blame.

It has been asked, however, whether this "famed harlequin," as Ravenscroft calls him, albeit he may have first formally appeared upon the stage in the comedy of 'Scaramouch, a Philosopher,' had not already been

made familiar to the public by means of the booths or shows erected at the fairs for the exhibition of "drolls," dances, and other entertainments? And this is likely enough. Indeed seventy years before the performance of Ravenscroft's play there are traces of harlequin's presence upon our scene, although he may have made no long stay there And

PORTRAIT OF KEMP.

it seems probable that to the Shakespearian actor, William Kemp, the original representative of Dogberry, of Peter in 'Romeo and Juliet,' and possibly also of Justice Shallow, is really due the first introduction of harlequin to an English theatrical audience.

In 1607 was published an historical play, written by John Day, with the assistance of

W. Rowley and George Wilkins, and entitled 'The Travels of Three English Brothers, Sir Thomas, Sir Anthony, and Mr. Robert Shirley.' In this drama, which was presented at the Curtain Theatre, Shoreditch, Kemp is introduced as one of the characters, the actor, of course, playing his own part. The scene is laid at Venice; and Kemp is supposed to be visiting Sir Anthony Shirley, and informing him of the new plays produced in London, and especially of 'England's Joy,' performed at the Swan Theatre in 1602, and exhibiting, after an allegorical fashion, certain of the chief events in the reign of Elizabeth. Presently an "Italian harlequin" is announced, who offers to provide an extemporal play or *commedia al improviso*. Kemp, who is attended by his boy or apprentice, agrees, at the instance of Sir Anthony, to assist the harlequin, observing, "I am somewhat hard of study and like your honour, but if they will invent any extemporal merriment, I'll put out the small sack of wit I ha' left in venture with them." Thereupon follows, Sir Anthony having withdrawn, a long series of coarse drolleries between Kemp and the harlequin. It may be noted that Kemp had strolled far; he must have been one of the first English actors who visited the Continent. He was a morris-dancer, and the woodcut upon the title-page of "Kemp's Nine Days' Wonder: performed

in a dance from London to Norwich," 1600, represents him as wearing a sort of brocaded jacket and scarf, dancing with bells on his legs, attended by one Thomas Slye, playing on the tabour. He had, as a morris-dancer, travelled in France, Germany, and Italy, visiting Venice and Rome; he even professed that he had proceeded as far as Jerusalem, without, perhaps, expecting anyone to credit this pretension. The real history of the Brothers Shirley, upon which John Day founded his play, may be seen in Fuller's 'Account of the Worthies of Sussex,' and in other of the English chronicles.

It is likely that the Italian harlequin who appeared in Day's play was introduced expressly at the suggestion of the travelled actor Kemp. Did Shakespeare take his seat among the spectators at the Curtain Theatre in 1607, to note the strange character his Dogberry had brought from Venice? Surely that too is likely. Yet this early harlequin, represented by an unknown performer, had little in common with the mute dancer, the spangled, graceful attitudiniser, the harlequin of the modern English theatre. Kemp's harlequin was, no doubt, much more akin to the Arlecchino of Italian pantomime: a country clown of the province of Bergamo, wearing a coat, motley from much patching, a simple rustic, a coward and a glutton, a dupe, a butt, earning cuffs, kicks, and con-

tempt from all about him. Addison, meeting this harlequin upon his native soil, described his character as "made up of blunders and absurdities: he is to mistake one name for another, to forget his errands, and to run his head against every post that appears in his way." But had this Arlecchino of Bergamo no progenitor or proto-plast? It was thought at one time that the Italian Zany could be traced to the Sannio of the Romans, the jester mentioned by Cicero, until it was shown that Zanni, by which name Arlecchino was commonly known, was more probably, in the vicious pronunciation of Lombardy, a corruption of Giovanni—the commonest of Italian christian-names. Still there are students who like to attribute to the pantomime family, or to certain of its members, a most remote and oriental origin, or to run it to earth, as it were, in the heathen mythology. Some delight to perceive in Mercury and his caduceus the foreshadowing of harlequin and his wand; to trace back columbine to Psyche, pantaloon to Charon, and to detect in Momus the first parent of clown, whose expansive lips are pronounced an imitation or survival of the ancient masks of classic comedy. For ordinary purposes, however, it is as well to accept as sufficient the fact that harlequin and his company comes to us directly from Italy.

Not all of the characters of Italian panto-

mime have become acclimatised in England, or found an abiding place upon our stage. Il Pantaleone is settled amongst us as pantaloon, albeit if he has never been valued here for the reasons to which he owes his existence—as a representative or a caricature of those Venetian senators whose opulence and arrogance once stirred general envy and hatred in Italy. Scapino, a typical knave of Bergamo, contrasting with Arlecchino, a fool from the same province, is now our Christmas clown; and the Neapolitan Policinello is well known to us as punch, if he has long seceded from the theatre to reign in a puppet-show of his own, and become less a being of flesh and blood than a doll of wood and paint. But of the Dottore Graziano, the quack physician of Bologna, pompous, grandiloquent, clothed in black, and very corpulent; the Bolognese Narciso di Mal Albergo, a vain Adonis, pedantic and credulous; the Milanese Beltramo, a valet of invincible stupidity; and of the hectoring bombastic Capitano Spavento, with his absurd dress, his enormous plumed hat, and rapier of preposterous length, a burlesque of the Spanish soldiery, brought to Italy by the wars of Charles V.—our English stage knows little or nothing. However, the establishment in Paris during the seventeenth century of a company of Franco-Italian comedians had its effect upon the French drama, and indirectly

influenced the English stage. Molière certainly owed many of his scenes to the Italian plays; while Mrs. Behn's three-act farce, 'The Emperor of the Moon,' produced at the Theatre Royal, in 1687, was borrowed from the French of Nolant de Fatouville, who, about this time, supplied the Parisian company of Italians with many of their pieces. In 'The Emperor of the Moon,' Harlequin and Scaramouch both appear, and play off innumerable tricks and antics. They are the servants respectively of Don Cinthio and Dr. Baliardo, the lover and the pantaloon of the plot, and are both in love with Mopsophil, the duenna of Bellemante and Elaria, who may be said to share the part of columbine between them. The characters are not mutes. They interchange, indeed, very lively speeches. There is abundance of singing and dancing in the play, with excellent opportunities for the scene-painter and stage machinist. London made further acquaintance with the harlequin of Paris when, in 1718, a French company of comedians took possession of the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, and presented a variety of French plays and operas, among them 'Les Deux Arlequins,' and 'La Foire de St. Germain,' the audience being supplied with "book of the words"—a page of French dialogue facing a page of English translation, in the manner of the modern *libretti* sold at our Italian opera-houses. It was, perhaps, in

consequence of these French performances that, in 1719, the comedian Bullock, in the character of Harlequin, spoke the epilogue to the play of 'Tis Well if it Takes.'

Entertainments of singing and dancing had been introduced upon the English stage by Sir William Davenant, "to check," as Cibber records, "the superiority enjoyed by the royal comedians in their exhibition of the regular drama." It was not until early in the eighteenth century, however, that the dancing took the form of ballet as we now understand it, set forth any fable, or possessed any significance or particular coherence. The ballet in England began with the story of Mars and Venus, but soon it enlisted the characters of Italian comedy, depriving them of speech, but expressing their adventures by means of dances, postures, and gesticulations.

Rich, the manager of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields Theatre, first presented pantomimes upon his stage for the same reason that had moved Davenant to introduce entertainments of dancing and singing: by way of check to the superiority of the rival theatre. From 1717 to his death in 1761, Rich was a fertile producer of pantomimes. In his youth he had essayed to act in the regular drama, and even personated the hero of Jones's tragedy of 'The Earl of Essex.' He was soon convinced, however, that he should succeed rather as a mute than as a speaker; and,

assuming the name of Lun, he subsequently acquired special fame as a harlequin. He began with "little harlequinades in the taste of the Italian night-scenes," but in 1723 "he blazed forth," as a historian of the stage has described it, the genius of pantomime, producing his 'Necromancer, or the History of Dr. Faustus,' with extraordinary success. For the first time in the annals of the drama the playbill was so filled with the account of this elaborate and costly pantomime, that room could scarcely be found to print the name of the play that preceded it. Indeed, a play before the pantomime seems only to have been presented for form's sake. Rich may fairly be accounted the inventor of the theatrical entertainment known as English pantomime. The popularity of these performances was quite beyond question: the theatre was crowded night after night, and the manager's treasury benefited greatly. Pope, finding room in 'The Dunciad' for allusion to "immortal Rich," dealt severely with the taste of the town in regard to pantomimes, and their absurdity and extravagance. "Persons of the first quality in England" were accused of attending these representations twenty and thirty times in a season. But, as Theophilus Cibber wrote, "however the severer critics might cry out against these mummeries, as they often call them, yet, as the managers found laying out some hundreds on a piece of

this description would bring them in as many thousands, who can be surprised that they continued them, while they turned so much to their account?"

Rich's pantomimes, it may be noted, consisted of two parts, the one serious, the other comic. With the help of "gay scenes, fine habits, grand dances, appropriate music, and other decorations," he usually exhibited in dramatic form some familiar story, while "between the pauses or acts of this serious representation he introduced a comic fable, consisting chiefly of the courtship of harlequin and columbine, with a variety of surprising adventures and tricks produced by the magic wand of harlequin: such as the sudden transformation of palaces and temples to huts and cottages; of men and women into wheelbarrows and joint-stools; of trees turned to houses, colonnades to beds of tulips, and mechanics' shops into serpents and ostriches." So Tom Davies, the biographer of Garrick, describes the pantomimes of his time.

If Rich was the inventor of English pantomime, he was also the inventor of the English harlequin, the agile dancer, the graceful lover, the skilled attitudiniser and gymnast of our stage. Pope's line, "Lo! one vast egg produces human race," had reference to Rich's trick of hatching harlequin out of a large egg. This was regarded as a masterpiece of dumbshow, and is described in glow-

ing terms by a contemporary writer. "From the first chipping of the egg, his receiving motion, his feeling the ground, his standing upright, to his quick harlequin trip round the empty shell, through the whole progression, every trip had its tongue and every motion a

PUNCH AND HARLEQUIN, FROM HOGARTH'S PRINT, "A JUST VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE," PUBLISHED IN 1725.

voice." He was also famed for his "catching a butterfly," for his "statue scene," for his graceful and affecting leave-taking of columbine, his trick of scratching his ear with his foot, like a dog, and his performance of a certain dance, when he executed three hundred steps in a rapid advance of three yards

only. Very much of the "stage business" of our modern harlequins they certainly owe to the invention and example of John Rich. The costumes worn by Rich consisted of the parti-coloured, rather loosely-fitting doublet and trousers so often reproduced by Watteau and other painters of the last century in their masquerade and *fête-champêtre* subjects. The present dress of the English harlequin dates from the year 1800, when the pantomime of "Harlequin Amulet, or the Magic of Mona," was produced at Drury Lane. Mr. James Bryne, the ballet-master—he had been a member of the Drury Lane *corps de ballet* even in Garrick's time—appeared as harlequin in "a white silk shape, fitting without a wrinkle, and into which the variegated silk patches were woven, the whole being profusely covered with spangles, and presenting a very sparkling appearance." The spectators approved this new style of dress, and greatly applauded Mr. Byrne. In Grimaldi's judgment—and Grimaldi was an expert or scientific witness in all pantomimic matters—Byrne was the best harlequin of his time. He came of a dancing family, and his descendants danced after him. His son, the late Mr. Oscar Byrne—deriving his christian-name from parental success in the Ossianic ballet of 'Oscar and Malvina'—was long well-known to the public as the ingenious ballet-master of Covent Garden and the Lyceum Theatres,

notably during the brilliant managements of Madame Vestris and Mr. Charles Mathews.

Rich's harlequin was dumb, and many of Rich's followers were faithful to his example, at any rate in the matter of dumbness. At what was called the "burletta house" the harlequin was also dumb invariably, for speech unaccompanied by music was in those times of monopoly the peculiar privilege of the patent theatres. The historical case of the foreign clown Delpini, who was actually committed to prison for his breach of the law, in that from the stage of the unpatented Royalty Theatre he had exclaimed "Roast beef!" the orchestra remaining silent the while, needs not to be further dwelt upon. Speaking harlequins did not immediately disappear, however. The comedians, King and Woodward, excelled as speaking harlequins, and from the time of Garrick what were called "speaking pantomimes" were found to be attractive entertainments. In the prologue to one of his productions of this class, presented after the death of Rich, Garrick thought it necessary, however, to apologise for endowing his harlequin with powers of speech, and paid tribute to the excellence of the departed performer and the eloquence of his dumb motions:

'Tis wrong,
The wits will say, to give the fool a tongue.
When Lun appeared, with matchless art and whim,
He gave the power of speech to every limb;
Though masked and mute, conveyed his quick intent,
And told in frolic gestures all he meant.

In 1820, Hazlitt censured the revival of 'Shakespeare *versus* Harlequin,' one of Garrick's pantomimes. "It is called a speaking pantomime," writes the critic. "We had rather it had said nothing. It is better to act folly than to talk it. . . . A speaking pantomime such as this one is not unlike a flying waggon," etc. And in 1830, Leigh Hunt reviews another speaking pantomime, called 'Harlequin Pat and Harlequin Bat, or the Giant's Causeway,' produced at Covent Garden: "A 'speaking pantomime' is a contradiction in terms. It is a little too Irish. It is as much as to say, 'Here you have all dumb-show talking.' This, to be sure, is what made Grimaldi's talking so good. It was so rare and seasonable that it only proved the rule by the exception. The clowns of late speak too much. To keep on saying at every turn, 'Hallo!' or 'Don't!' or 'What do you mean?' only makes one think that the piece is partly written and not written well." It may be noted that the "speaking harlequin" of 1830 was the admired Irish comedian, Tyrone Power, assisted by an adroit "double" to accomplish the indispensable posturing, dancing, and jumping through trapdoors in the scene. After a few nights Power relinquished his share in the representation, and the "speaking harlequin" was personated now by Keeley, and now by the late F. Matthews. Perhaps these were the last

"speaking harlequins" seen or heard upon the English stage.

Rich's harlequin had his sentimental moments; but he was grotesque also, capable of many droll antics and exploits. Though he had given up speech, he yet preserved many of the characteristics of the French harlequin. In what respects the French harlequin differed from the Italian is curiously pointed out, under date the 8th May, 1767, in the 'Mémoires Secrets de Bachaumont,' when of a new performer of this part at the Théâtre Italien, Paris, it is complained that he had "trop conservé du jeu de sa patrie: il est balourd, niais et sot, et nous exigeons ici beaucoup de finesse dans le jeu, de souplesse dans le geste, de légèreté dans les attitudes, de gentillesse dans toute l'action, de saillies naïves dans le dialogue, de talents, même accessoires, pour amuser." Certain of his qualities, however, seem rather to pertain to our Christmas clown than to harlequin as we know him. This is Marmontel's description of the French harlequin of his time: "His character is a mixture of ignorance, simplicity, cleverness, stupidity, and grace; he is a kind of sketch of a man, a tall child, yet with gleams of reason and wit, all whose mistakes and follies have something arch about them. The true mode of representing him is to give him suppleness, agility, the playfulness of a kitten, with a certain gross-

ness of appearance which renders his conduct more absurd; his part is that of a patient faithful valet, always in love, always in hot water, either on his master's or on his own account, troubled and quieted as easily as a child, and whose grief is as entertaining as his joy." No doubt upon our stage harlequin gradually inclined more and more to sentiment, and less and less to comicality; ceased to be a droll servant, and became simply a devoted dancing lover; forfeited indeed his place as chief member of the pantomimic family, when the part of clown, entrusted to the famous Grimaldi, acquired special importance, almost to the absorption of general attention and favour. It was Grimaldi, "the Garrick of clowns," as Theodore Hook called him, who in great part devised the eccentric attire still worn by our clowns—a sort of blending of the costumes of the French Pierrot and the Old English jester: the floured face and the white dress of Pierrot being treated as a ground-work upon which to paint variegated spots, stars, and patches; while to Grimaldi is due nearly all the "comic business" of modern harlequinade. It may be said, indeed, that certain of the grosser elements in the character of the original harlequin have fallen from him to be appropriated by the clown—habitually moved to appropriation, and provided, as we all know, with ample pockets by way of aiding his disposition thitherward. Grimaldi

as clown seems sometimes to have assumed a mask—that peculiar property of the harlequin. A dramatic critic, reviewing, in 1811, the performance of Grimaldi as the clown in the pantomimes of 'Mother Goose,' and 'Harlequin Asmodeus,' observes that he "used the mask more frequently than we recollect to have seen it used by any preceding performer; thus recurring in some sort to the mode of the ancient drama." Cibber found the best excuse for harlequin's mask to consist in the fact that no theatrical assurance could get through with a bare face the low, senseless, and monstrous things the masked actor is required to say and do. And he proceeds to narrate how the popular low comedian, Pinkethman, once lost countenance completely, lacking his mask. In Mrs. Behn's 'Emperor of the Moon,' Pinkethman, playing harlequin, was urged by several admirers to abandon his "useless unmeaning mask of a black cat," for it was thought that owing to that disguise "a great deal of the drollery and spirit of his grimace was lost." Yielding to these solicitations, Pinkethman therefore one night played harlequin without his mask. The result was unfortunate. "Pinkethman could not take to himself the shame of the character without being concealed; he was no more harlequin; his humour was quite disconcerted; his conscience could not with the same effrontery declare against nature, without the cover of

that unchanging face, which he was sure would never blush for it. No, it was quite another case: without that armour his courage could not come up to the bold strokes that were necessary to get the better of common-sense." It is only in regard to his mask, however, that Pinkethman's harlequin—the harlequin of Queen Anne's days—can be identified with that not unpleasing, yet rather insipid and insignificant personage, the harlequin of these Victorian times.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OMNIBUS BOX.

In times past. the omnibus box was a power in the operatic state. As a matter of fact, there were two omnibus boxes; but one seems always to have exercised greater influence than its fellows or opposite neighbour. In the old Opera-house, or King's Theatre, built by Michael Novosielski in 1790, renamed Her Majesty's Theatre upon the accession of Queen Victoria, and destroyed by fire in 1867, the omnibus boxes were below the level of the stage, the box cushions resting almost upon the boards. The occupants of these boxes were noblemen and gentlemen, subscribers to the opera, who formed a sort of club, admitting a new member, whenever a seat for the season became vacant, only after his name had been formally proposed and duly balloted. This provision, however, was waived in the case of a royal personage desiring entrance to "the omnibus." In a letter from the Marquis of Donegal to Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, M.P., dated February

1846, it is stated that, His Royal Highness Prince George of Cambridge having expressed "a desire to fill the vacancy in the box occasioned by the resignation of Lord Charleville," it had been considered right, after consultation with Lord A. Fitzclarence, Colonel Wildman, Hon. J. Macdonald, G. Wombwell, Esq., &c., that His Royal Highness should be at once admitted, "without being subject to the ballot." A letter of later date from Lord Donegal refers to Mr. Duncombe's resolve, on account of his infirm state of health, to retire from "our box." "If it be a consolation to you," writes his lordship, "I am confident that I speak the sentiments of every member of it when I say that they one and all deeply lament the retirement of one with whom they have been so long associated, have spent so many happy and agreeable days, and whose loss they can never replace. For myself, my dear Tommy, I can only say that, from my earliest intimacy with you, I never had but the feeling of sincere friendship, and, so far as in my power lay, I ever strived to prove it," &c.

The influence of the omnibus box survived from the early period when the existence of Italian Opera in England depended absolutely upon aristocratic support and the purses of the subscribers. Assistance from the general public, scoffingly known as "railroad people" to the exalted and fashionable of five-and-

thirty years ago, could by no means be counted upon by the impresario. Musical amateurs of humble means were few indeed. It is told of the famous Dr. Arne that in his youth, when he would hear an Italian Opera, he borrowed a livery and mounted the stairs of the King's Theatre, passing into the gallery; for footmen presumed to be in attendance upon their employers, patrons of the opera, were then admitted free to that portion of the house. Lord Mount Edgcumbe, whose musical reminiscences dated from 1773, described the opera boxes and pit of that period as "filled exclusively with the highest classes of society, all, without exception, in the full dress then usually worn. The audiences thus assembled," he continued, "were considered as indisputably presenting a finer spectacle than any other theatre in Europe, and absolutely astonished the foreign performers, to whom such a sight was entirely new." The noble critic was dealing with the theatre burnt down in 1789, which contained but few private boxes, the whole front of the house being devoted to a grand amphitheatre communicating with the pit; but the audiences of a later date were not the less deserving of his admiration for their distinction and quality. Mr. Ebers, manager of the King's Theatre between 1821 and 1829, writes of his pit as the meeting-place of "all the men of fashion," and continues "one of the *agrémens* of the

King's Theatre is the certainty every one has of meeting his friends from all parts of the world. It is the resort equally of the lovers of music, the dance, and of those who care little for either, but who like to meet each other, and feast their eyes by gazing on all the most beautiful as well as the best dressed women resident in this country." Mr. Ebers, further prints the names of the subscribers to the boxes of the King's Theatre for the season of 1789. There were then some one hundred and twelve boxes; but the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland are the only members of the royal family included in the list. When the King and Queen attended the performances at the Italian Opera-House, certain boxes were borrowed from the subscribers and appropriated to the use of the royal visitors. His Majesty expressed his concern that he should be the occasion of so much inconvenience, Mr. Taylor, who was manager in 1800, arranged that a row of arm-chairs, "with locks and keys to the bottoms of them," should be placed at the back of the pit for the accommodation of those subscribers who had surrended their boxes to royalty. These arm-chairs were an anticipation of the stalls, which were not really introduced, however, until the season of 1829. Originally very few in number, the stalls gradually increased until they took possession of the whole pit. It was supposed that the audience would seriously

oppose the innovation, and would also express dissatisfaction at an economical measure, also introduced in 1829—the substitution of sundry French musicians for the principal performers in the orchestra, Messrs. Lindley, Wilman, Nicholson, Harper, &c. Those who looked, however, for a theatrical riot of the old-fashioned kind were disappointed. The overture to 'La Donna del Lago,' the opera of the night, was hissed, and cries of "Off! off!" were audible as the curtain rose; but the dissentients were silenced, and the performances proceeded without interruption. The audience, perhaps, could not but listen respectfully to the Malcolm Græme of Pisaroni and the Roderick Dhu of Donizetti.

George IV. visited the opera for the first time after his accession to the throne on March 20, 1821, when "every preparation was made suitable to the event." The anteroom and the royal box were hung with satin, ornamented with festoons of gold lace, the decorations costing altogether some three hundred pounds. His Majesty, wearing a field-marshal's uniform, and attended by the Dukes of York, Clarence, Wellington, and others, members of his household, was met at the doors of the theatre by the Earl of Ailesbury, Count St. Antonio, and Lord Lowther, members of the committee of management, by Mr. Ayrton, the conductor, and Mr. Ebers, the lessee. "Two boxes over the

orchestra, on the left side of the second tier, having been selected by His Majesty, were thrown into one for his reception." With his "usual benignity," he addressed a few words to Mr. Ebers, and entered his box amidst the loudest acclamations of the audience. In the second scene of the ballet, 'Zara,' the scenic artist of the theatre found an opportunity of complimenting his Majesty: a transparent rainbow was exhibited, bearing the inscription "Vive le Roi!" surmounted by a figure of the goddess Fame. The king, however, was not a subscriber to the opera, had engaged no box for the season. Nobility much more than royalty at this time lent support to the management and performances of the King's Theatre. Mr. Ebers, however, had no great reason to boast of the patronage bestowed upon his early efforts as impresario. He confesses that when he opened the theatre for his first season "twelve boxes only were subscribed for." His predecessors had usually published a little book, "a sort of opera-box directory," setting forth the names of the subscribers and the numbers of the boxes they had secured. Surprise was manifested that he had departed from this course. "I could not prevail upon myself," he writes, "to allege the true reason, which was my fear of betraying the nakedness of the land." In later times the Italian Opera-house was of course very abundantly patronised by Royalty. The public

journals, in 1838, drew attention to the fact that Queen Victoria, while rarely entering an English theatre, although a parliamentary committee had ascribed "the absence of royal encouragement" as one reason of the decline of the drama, had nevertheless "attended the Opera-house thirty-three nights out of thirty-nine, the exceptions being compulsory on account of assemblies at the palace."

De Quincey has related his early visits to the opera to enjoy the rich contralto tones of the "angelic Grassini;" how he took his seat in the gallery, listening in the intervals of performance to the music of the Italian language talked by Italian women, the gallery being usually crowded with Italians in those times; and how he evaded, in such wise, "the troublesome condition of appearing *en grande tenue*." Full dress when George III. was King, or when his son ruled as Prince Regent, was an important matter enough, and consisted of a long-tailed coat, which might be of any colour, dun brown, bottle-green, mulberry, or even scarlet—it was black only in cases of mourning—amply ruffled at the wrist; a white cravat swathed round an erect collar; smallclothes, with diamond or gold buckles, and silk stockings and shoes; an open waistcoat to display a profusely frilled shirt-front, a dress sword, white gloves, and a *chapeau bras*, or cocked hat flattened for tucking under the arm. Trousers were not tolerated as a

legitimate portion of evening dress until about 1816. Subscribers, and especially the renters of the omnibus boxes, enjoyed the privilege of passing behind the scenes during the hours of performance. In the best French or Italian they could muster, these patrons of art paid court to the prima donna or rendered homage to the *première danseuse*; some were even content to adore such minor functionaries as the *coryphées* or *figurantes*.

The subscribers were to be viewed as the impresario's partners, their liability being limited, however, to the amount of their subscriptions. In 1773, as Lord Mount Edgcumbe states, "the price of a subscription to a box for fifty representations was twenty guineas a seat," each box probably containing six seats; in 1807, the year of Catalani's second engagement upon exorbitant terms, the price of a whole box was raised to three hundred guineas. The nights of performance were Tuesdays and Saturdays; but towards the close of the season it was usual to offer extra entertainments on Thursdays for the benefit now of this singer, now of that; otherwise there were no extra nights. The season commenced in December and continued to July or August. The subscribers believed themselves entitled not merely to advise the manager, but to expostulate with him upon every occasion, to dictate to him the plan of his campaign, the artists he should engage,

the operas and ballets he should produce, and to censure him in good round terms when his proceedings disappointed expectation. Mr. Lumley, in his 'Reminiscences of the Opera,' has left a touching account of the troubles of an impresario in relation to his subscribers. He relates how he was persecuted now by a noble duke and duchess who insisted upon the more frequent appearance of certain singers; now by seventeen influential subscribers signing a round robin and demanding an important change in the cast of an opera that had been announced for immediate representation. A lady wrote to express the dissatisfaction of a royal duchess with the existing arrangements, and suggesting the production of more attractive operas than had been announced in the prospectus; otherwise, urged this correspondent, it would be necessary for the subscribers to consider their position in regard to the next season, for it was better to be without a box altogether than to be so continually disappointed by the entertainments provided by the manager. Gentlemen "who would have blushed to ask for money at his hands" pressed upon the manager engagements involving not only large outlay, but disastrous pecuniary consequences; the indignant *dilettanti*, in the event of refusal, vowing vengeance against the offender, and the exercise of all their power and influence to his prejudice. Now demand was made for the

reinstatement of certain members of the *corps de ballet* dismissed for insubordination. Now a subscriber, for the gratification of his individual fancy, called for an extra ballet for the exhibition of a particular *danseuse* "who ought not to appear before *him* in a mere *divertissement*." "Old subscribers" insisted on changes in the performances, and announced their displeasure if the demand was not immediately met. Clubmen protested against operas that they considered a "bore." Men of influence wanted the chief singers, their other engagements notwithstanding, to appear at private concerts. In addition there arrived hosts of anonymous letters of advice and denunciation, promising legions of concealed enemies if certain steps were not taken or if a particular course were not abandoned. Naturally Mr. Lumley often found the difficulty of complying with the demands of his subscribers quite insurmountable. "How I was ever able to thread my way through this entangled labyrinth," he writes, "can only be understood—if understood it ever can be—by those who have themselves adventured upon similar paths; and, in the midst of all this embarrassment, quarrels have to be settled with influential noblemen, because their friends or members of their family have been refused entrance for not being in strict evening dress!"

The opera public, for all its airs of exclusiveness and superfine gentility, could yet

upon occasion comport itself very uproariously: the nobility and gentry, indeed, were easily convertible into rioters. In 1805 great disturbance arose at the King's Theatre. Certain of the bishops troubled themselves much more than they are now disposed to do concerning operatic affairs. Now the Bishop of Durham found fault with the paucity and the transparency of the dancers' dresses; now the Bishop of London informed Mr. Michael Kelly, the stage manager, that, if the performances at the Opera-house were not brought to a close before twelve o'clock on Saturday nights, the theatre should be deprived of its licence and shut up. Mr. Kelly, having fear of the bishop before his eye, ordered the curtain to be lowered as the clock struck twelve, even though the grand *pas de deux* of M. Deshayes and Mdlle. Parisot might be thus abruptly ended. Mr. Kelly had reckoned without his public, however. Cries arose from all parts of the house—"Raise the curtain! Finish the ballet!" Hissing, hooting, and yelling, in which, it is recorded, "most of the ladies of quality joined," resounded on every side. It was in vain that Mr. Kelly apologised, explaining the bishop's mandate. The audience would not hear of the bishop. They expressed their sense of the conduct of the management by throwing the chairs out of the boxes into the pit, tearing up the benches, smashing the chandeliers, and destroying the

pianoforte and the other musical instruments which the performers, taking to flight, had left behind them in the orchestra. The military were called in, the riot continuing until half-past two on Sunday morning, and the damage, it was alleged, amounting to 5,000*l.*

In 1813 there occurred a like tumult. The brilliant singer Catalani, who had especially endeared herself to British audiences by her singing of 'God save the King,' 'Rule Britannia,' 'Cease your Funning,' and other English songs, with extraordinary and even extravagant variations, had refused to appear upon the stage, although the playbills of the night announced her name. But her salary was in arrear; and, acting upon the advice of one of the most avaricious of husbands, she resolved to absent herself from the theatre until payment was made to her of her dues. The displeasure of the audience soon became evident; the performances were interrupted by loud hisses, shouts, and gibes. At length the subscribers appear to have agreed upon a general invasion of the stage. In a moment the boards were covered by swarms of gentlemen who, we read, "from the general mourning, made a most sombre appearance." The performers retreated, ranging themselves upon a platform at the rear of the stage. The invaders, indulging in furious gestures, waved their canes aloft, and forthwith proceeded to

destroy the scenes and theatrical properties. As though to sever the rioters from the general body of the audience, the curtain was lowered, only to be raised again presently to save it from being torn to pieces. At length a speech was made on behalf of the manager, Mr. Taylor, who was absent, a prisoner in the King's Bench: Madame Catalani's re-appearance was promised, and the indulgence of the subscribers was entreated, with an assurance that everything should be done in the future to content them. Attempt was now made to clear the stage; the guards on duty in the theatre made their appearance, and lent assistance in dispersing the intruders. This interference of the military was much resented by the audience, however; the soldiers, very reluctant to employ force, were surrounded, hustled, separated, and in some cases deprived of their arms. Their forbearance under these trying conditions won much admiration from a witness of the scene, who has recorded that "it was unquestionably in their power, whatever might have been the immediate result to themselves, to have wounded severely or destroyed the lives of many of the young gentlemen who inflicted on them this temporary disgrace." The victors, possessed of the muskets of the soldiers, flourished the bayonets triumphantly, and then, "with the most marked disrespect and contempt, threw the arms

into the orchestra, among the lamps and desks;" the musicians having prudently disappeared, carrying with them their books and instruments. Four or five muskets thus disposed of, a soldier's cap was kicked about the stage by sundry young men of fashion. Peace now reigned for some little time; "the beaux who had acquitted themselves with such successful valour advanced to the side-boxes, shaking hands with the fair in the lower circle or bowing to those above, and receiving in return the enviable rewards of approving beauty." Presently one young gentleman, who had been pacing the stage with much triumphant arrogance of manner, was deemed to have insulted the audience by the rudeness of his gestures. An apology was insisted upon; he was dragged to the proscenium so violently that his coat was nearly torn from his back; he was seized by his cravat, and twisted and squeezed this way and that in the endeavour to force him upon his knees. His assailants, pushing and thronging together, even fell into the orchestra, to the injury of the stage lamps and themselves. The riot terminated absurdly enough with an address from the ridiculous "Romeo" Coates, otherwise known as "the Amateur of Fashion," who alleged that he had been requested to interfere by "some of the most respectable noblemen in the country and several gentlemen that wore

stars." Said Mr. Coates, with more sense than elegance, "Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great misfortune, we must allow, to be deprived of the talents of Madame Catalani; but it is of no use for us *to go a-rioting*." The orator was driven from the stage; the uproar then ceased, and the audience gradually left the theatre. To prevent the recurrence of such disturbances, the passages leading from the auditory to the stage were closed by order of the Lord Chamberlain. They were reopened, however, at a later date, "to the great satisfaction of a large portion of the subscribers and attenders at the opera," at the commencement of Mr. Eber's tenancy of the theatre.

The Ingoldsby Legend, "A Row in an Omnibus Box: a Legend of the Haymarket," professedly an account of "perhaps the greatest theatrical civil war since the celebrated O.P. riot," is referable to the year 1840, the disturbance arising because of the non-appearance of the favourite baritone Tamburini. The manager, M. Laporte, bent upon reducing his expenses, and "to meet," as Mr. Chorley says, "the exigencies of law and debt," had raised his prices, shortened his seasons, and, further, had ventured "to replace his good artists by others less good," but also less costly. He alleged that he suffered from the tyranny of an "Old Guard" of singers, who happened, however,

to be the greatest operatic artists in the world, their names being Grisi and Persiani, Rubini and Mario, Lablache and Tamburini; and that, as a step towards "breaking up the clique and foiling their schemes," he had resolved to dispense with one of their number, selecting Tamburini for dismissal because it was believed his place could be fairly supplied by Coletti, a singer who had obtained much applause in the opera-houses of Italy. Certain of the subscribers determined to oppose this arrangement; they suspected, with reason, that the manager was sacrificing opera to ballet: and they objected, moreover, to the dispersion of a troop of singers who "had satisfied the public not merely by their individual genius, but by their mutual understanding in combination." Mr. Lumley suggests—but his suggestion is not credible—that the "Tamburini Row," as it was called, was instigated by the "Old Guard" of singers, who thus carried on a guerilla warfare against their manager "behind a screen of noble lay figures."

The Legend recounts how Doldrum, the manager, decides upon a change in his company, and the substitution of Fal-de-ral-tit for Fiddle-de-dee:

> "Though Fiddle-de-dee sings loud and clear,
> And his tones are sweet, yet his terms are dear.
> The glove won't fit: The deuce a bit!
> I shall give an engagement to Fal-de-ral-tit!"

The audience will not listen to Fal-de-ral-tit. Fiddle-de-dee is demanded:

When a row begun—
Such a noise was never heard under the sun.
"Fiddle-de-dee! Where is he?
He's the artiste whom we all want to see.
Doldrum! Doldrum! Bid the manager come!"

Doldrum appears "in his opera-hat and his opera-tights."

"Ladies and gentlemen," then said he,
"Pray what may you please to want with me?"
"Fiddle-de-dee! Fiddle-de-dee!"
Folks of all sorts, and every degree—
Snob, and Snip, and haughty Grandee,
Duchesses, Countesses, fresh from their tea,
And shopmen who'd only come there for a spree,
Hulloo'd, and hooted, and roared with glee.
"Fiddle-de-dee! None but he!
Subscribe to his terms, whatever they be!
Agree, agree, or you'll very soon see,
In a brace of shakes we'll get up an O.P."
. . . . .
Doldrum, the manager, never before
In his lifetime had heard such a wild uproar!
Doldrum, the manager, turned to flee:
But he says, says he, "*Mort de ma vie!*
I shall nevare engage vid dat Fiddle-de-dee."
Then all the gentlefolks flew in a rage,
And they jumped from the omnibus on to the stage.
Lords, squires, and knights, they came down to the lights,
In their opera-hats and their opera-tights.
Ma'amselle Cherrytoes shook to her very toes;
She could not hop on, so hopped off on her merry toes,
And the evening concluded with 'Three times three,
Hip, hip, hurrah! for Fiddle-de-dee!"

According to Mr. Lumley's account, the disturbance did not commence until the opera, Donizetti's 'Torquato Tasso,' had been brought to an end. The first clamours came from the omnibus boxes. Shouts of "Tamburini!" "Laporte!" "Tamburini!"

were echoed from other parts of the house, with counter-cries of "Shame!" "No intimidation!" "Turn out the omnibus!" "You'd better try!" retorted the occupants of the box. M. Laporte appeared and reappeared, making repeated efforts to address the house; but his voice was lost in the uproar of yells, shouts, and hisses. He then held a sort of stormy conference with the gentlemen in the omnibus box. The curtain rose for the ballet. It was the first appearance in England of the admirable Mdlle. Cerito. For more than an hour the lady, with her attendant crowd of *figurantes*, stood, awaiting the permission of the audience to begin. In vain! For the fourth time Laporte presented himself. His manner was more subdued; he promised to make proposals to Tamburini. But this was not judged to be sufficient. So the tenants of the omnibus box, "among them a young prince of the blood," boldly leaped upon the stage. "The curtain now fell definitely, and, amidst the sympathetic cheers of one portion of the house and the hootings of another, the gallant chevaliers of the omnibus waved their hats triumphantly, and shouted 'Victory!'"

In the midst of the strife Mr. Lumley, as Laporte's agent and legal adviser, presently to be his successor as impresario, had exerted himself on the side of order. He had entered the box of the Duchess of Cambridge, be-

seeching her to exercise her influence over the rioters. At her grace's suggestion, he had even penetrated the omnibus box and expostulated with its occupants; to be summarily dismissed, however, when it was found that he had only expostulations to offer. After another evening of disturbance, and "a confused and contradictory paper war" with Tamburini, Laporte yielded to the gentlemen of the omnibus box. "I must treat them as spoiled children," he said. The good offices of Count d'Orsay were employed in mediation; Tamburini was re-engaged upon his own terms, and peace was re-established. The singer, moved by so remarkable an exhibition of public regard, shed tears. "If those tears could be analysed," said Laporte, "they would be found to be largely composed of gold and silver!" It was, in truth, a question of money that had parted the manager and the baritone. Let it be added that Tamburini was at this time singing his best—a brilliant artist, successful alike in tragedy and comedy, his voice rich, sweet, sonorous, two perfect octaves completely under control; his execution unequalled for its fluency, facility, accent, florid embellishment, and grandeur of phrasing.

The omnibus box took part in various later but less important disturbances. It was the misfortune of MM. Laporte and Lumley to quarrel both with their singers and their subscribers;

their system of management entailing at last great disasters upon Her Majesty's Theatre. The season of 1842 was famous for its dissensions and uproars. 'Beatrice di Tenda,' with Madame Frezzolini, was peremptorily rejected as a substitute for 'I Puritani,' with Madame Persiani as the heroine, and the night was wasted in rioting. Neither Mr. Lumley nor his stage manager could obtain a hearing; ladies left the house in terror; the Queen, who had signified her intention to visit the theatre, informed by special messenger of the tumult, remained in peace at Buckingham Palace. No opera at all was performed, the ballet being alone presented at a late hour before a limited number of spectators. In 1844 noisy demands were made for the engagement of the tenor Salvi; while the dancer St. Leon, the husband of Cerito, was violently hissed for supposed insolence to the tenants of the omnibus box. St. Leon was forgiven, however, upon his offering, in the 'Times' newspaper, an apology to the Duke of Beaufort. In 1846, consequent upon the hoarseness of Signor Mario, and the non-appearance of Mdlle. Cerito, a disturbance occurred rivalling all earlier events of the kind. "A storm of displeasure broke forth which lasted in full force for the whole evening." The following year saw the conversion of Covent Garden Theatre into an Italian Opera-house. The "railroad

people" and general public now vied in importance with the old aristocratic subscribers. Italian opera, losing its character as an entertainment only for the affluent and exclusive, relied more and more upon popular support, while its exhibitions advanced to a completeness they had never known before. The omnibus boxes lost their significance; at any rate, their occupants, whether princes of the blood or not, ceased to leap forth, harlequin-like, upon the stage, to gesticulate before the audience or to assail the impresario.

It may be noted that Mr. Carlyle, writing in the character of Professor Ezechiel Peasemeal, a distinguished American of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Buncombe, has recorded the particulars of a visit he once paid to Her Majesty's Theatre, and his impressions of two members of its company of performers—by chance, the Signor Coletti and the Mdlle. Cerito, who were the especial victims of the omnibus box in the matter of the Tamburini Row. It is likely, however, that Mr. Carlyle made the acquaintance of these artists at a later period of their history. Dismissed to make way for the elder and more admired singer, Coletti did not reappear in this country until the season of 1847. He was received with great favour, and he remained a member of the company during the four following years. He was of handsome presence, and he

was a skilled singer, in possession of a noble voice; but his histrionic method was somewhat heavy and monotonous. Mr. Carlyle writes: "One singer in particular, called Coletti, or some such name, seemed to me by the cast of his face, by the tones of his voice, by his general bearing, so far as I could read it, to be a man of deep and ardent sensibilities, of delicate intuitions, just sympathies; originally an almost poetic soul or man of genius, as we term it; stamped by nature as capable of far other work than squalling here, like a blind Samson, to make the Philistines sport." Of the exquisite dancer, the Cherrytoes of Ingoldsby, it is added: "One little Cerito, or Taglioni the Second, the night I was there, went bounding from the floor as if she had been made of Indian rubber or filled with hydrogen gas, and inclined by positive levity to bolt through the ceiling. Perhaps neither Semiramis nor Catherine II. had bred herself so carefully." Otherwise the dancing did not please Mr. Carlyle. He condemns the skirts of the ballet as 'muslin saucers;' finds the *figurantes* "little short of miraculous: whirling and spinning there in strange, mad vortexes, and then suddenly fixing themselves motionless, each upon her left or right great toe, with the other leg stretched out at an angle of ninety degrees, as if you had suddenly pricked into the floor, by one of their points, a pair or rather a multitudinous cohort of

mad restlessly jumping and clipping scissors, and so bidden them rest, with opened blades, and stand still, in the Devil's name. . . . Motion peculiar to the opera; perhaps the ugliest, and surely one of the most difficult ever taught a female creature in the world!"

CHAPTER V.

OF FIDDLERS.

THE violinist is now an esteemed personage, but in his original condition, when he was known simply as a fiddler, he was the subject of much scornful consideration and severe usage. His instrument was thought to be of too vulgar a kind to be employed upon refined occasions—it was not proper for a concert, although it did well enough as an aid to dancing, or an incentive to mirth at fairs and festivals, wakes and weddings. The fiddler's presence, indeed, could scarcely be dispensed with at these celebrations, and the nobles and magnates of the time were wont to number the humble musicians among their retainers and domestic servants, bestowing small stipends upon them, with cloaks and badges displaying the cognizance or arms of the family. The fiddlers were much in the situation of the players, and, like them, probably had permission to stroll and tender their services in different places, with an understanding that their master or patron had the

first claim upon their allegiance. And perhaps there were common fiddlers as there were common players, whose unattached and unprotected condition brought them near the rogue and vagabond category.

In an old play called 'The Return from Parnassus, or The Scourge of Simony, 1606, one of the characters thus addresses a company of fiddlers who seek payment for their performance: "Faith, fellow-fiddlers, here is no silver found in this place; no, not so much as the usual Christmas entertainment of musicians, a black jack of beer and a Christmas pye."

John Earle, Bishop of Worcester and afterwards of Salisbury, who published in 1628 his Micro-cosmographie—a curious collection of essays and sketches—has humorously portrayed a poor fiddler of his period. The unfortunate performer is described as "one that rubs two sticks together, as the Indians strike fire, and rubs a poor living out of it. He is but little above a beggar; he is often hungry, and is apt sometimes to win a broken pate for his pains. Otherwise his life is so many fits of mirth, and 'tis some mirth to see him. A good feast shall draw him five miles by the nose, and you shall track him again by the scent. His other pilgrimages are fairs and good houses, where his devotion is great to the Christmas; and no man loves good times better. He is in league with the tapsters

for the worshipful of the inn, and has their name more perfect than their men." Further, it is said of him that he prefers a new song to a new jacket, that he domineers at country weddings and Whitsun diversions, and that he hates naturally the Puritan as an enemy to his mirth. The description concludes quaintly: "The rest of him is drunk and in the stocks."

Our old English writers frequently allude to the performance of music in hostelries and taverns. The travellers of the sixteenth century who sought their ease in an inn, were usually offered the solace of sweet sounds among other sources of refreshment. Fynes Moryson, in his Itinerary, published in 1617, and containing his "ten years' travel through Germany, Bohmerland, Switzerland, Netherland, Denmark, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland, and Ireland," furnishes a particular account of hotel life, manners, and customs at that time. It seems that musicians were attached to the more important inns, and might be classed among the servants and retainers of the house. Bishop Earle's statement as to the fiddler being in league with the tapster, is so far confirmed by Moryson. While the guest dines, "if he has company especially, he shall be offered music, which he may freely take or refuse; and if he be solitary, the musicians will give him the good-day with music in the morning." The price to be paid for this portion of his entertainment

is not mentioned. It is included perhaps in the general reckoning, which the guest is to receive in writing at night or in the morning after breakfast, and which, "if it seems unreasonable, the host will satisfy him either for the due price or by abating part, especially if the servant deceive him in any way, which one of experience will soon find." Departing, the guest is advised that "if he give some few pence to the chamberlain and ostler, they wish him a happy journey." And it is added generally, that "a man cannot more truly command at home in his own house than he may do in his inn."

The popularity of the fiddle, its presence at merrymakings, and the aid it furnished to the pleasure of the public, excited the indignation of the Puritans. In due time the fiddle shared the fate of the player, was silenced and proscribed. An ordinance passed in 1658 contained the following clause: "And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if any person or persons commonly called fiddlers or minstrels shall, at any time after the said first day of July, be taken playing, fiddling, and making music in any inn, alehouse, or tavern, or shall be taken proffering themselves, or desiring or entreating any person or persons to hear them play or make music in any of the places aforesaid, that every such person and persons so taken shall be judged, and are hereby adjudged and declared

to be rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars, and shall be proceeded against and punished as rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars within the said statute; any law, statute, or usage to the contrary hereof in any wise notwithstanding." Roundhead prejudices are confessed in the invectives of Hudibras against Crowdero and his profession, and reference is made to the ordinance against fiddling in the lines:—

> He and that engine of vile noise,
> On which illegally he plays,
> Shall dictum factum both be brought
> To condign punishment as they ought, &c.

But no ordinance or Act of Parliament could silence music or wholly suppress the fiddlers. They led proscribed lives, but still they lived. The theatres were closed against them; they might no longer occupy the music-room or the balcony above the stage, and provide harmonious accompaniments to the more important transactions of the drama. Nor could they now appear in the palaces or mansions of the great upon the occasion of balls, banquets, or others festivals. They had fallen upon sad, straitlaced, psalm-singing times. They could only play in a furtive, subdued way, in whispers, as it were. They hid their instruments under their ragged cloaks, and haunted the tavern doors or peered in at the low windows of inns, not only because of the gratifying odours of mulled

wine and cooked meats, or in envy of the warmth of the chimney corners, but in quest of a merry gentleman or two who might care for a tune by way of adding relish to his supper. "Will you have any music, gentlemen?" humbly asked the poor fiddlers, sliding into the warm room and the hopeful presence of the merry gentlemen. They crept about in pairs, we are told, and were glad to accept the humblest dole in payment for their strains. But oftentimes these mendicant artists met with very insulting rebuffs from those who were disinclined to listen, or were without music in themselves, "nor moved by concord of sweet sounds."

Sometimes the habit of leading this wandering existence developed a taste for it; or the musicians could not or would not rise again to the position from which they had fallen, and continued therefore to be vagrants long after the necessity for vagrancy had completely passed away. It is told of Thomas Eccles, a member of a family famed for their musical gifts during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—John Eccles set to music, among other works, Congreve's Ode to St. Cecilia, and his masque The Judgment of Paris—that he passed his whole life as a mendicant or street-musician. One who knew him and was, on the authority of Sir John Hawkins, "a good judge of music," relates: "It was about the month of November in the

year 1735, that I with some friends were met to spend the even at a tavern in the City, when this man (John Eccles), in a mean but decent garb, was introduced to us by the waiter. Immediately upon opening the door I heard the twang of one of his strings from under his coat, which was accompanied with the question, 'Gentlemen, will you please to hear any music?' Our curiosity and the modesty of the man's deportment inclined us to say yes; and music he gave us, such as I had never heard before, nor shall again under the same circumstances. With as fine and delicate a hand as I ever heard, he played the whole fifth and ninth solo of Corelli, two songs of Mr. Handel, Del Minnacier in Otho, and Spero si mio carovere in Admetus; in short, his performance was such as would command the attention of the nicest ear, and left us, his auditors, much at a loss to guess what it was that constrained him to seek his living in a way so disreputable. He made no secret of his name. He said he was the youngest of three brothers, and that Henry, the middle one, had been his master, and was then in the service of the king of France.' Enquiry concerning Thomas Eccles led to the discovery that he was idle, dissolute, and addicted to drinking. He lived in Butcher-row, near Temple-Bar, and was well known to the musicians of his time, who thought themselves disgraced by his proceedings. It seems

that this state of musical mendicancy was commonly known as "going a-busking." One of the Leges Convivials drawn up by Ben Jonson, and inscribed in gold letters in the Apollo Room of the Devil Tavern, forbade the admission of such persons as fiddlers into the assembly.

With the restoration of Charles the Second, the players and the fiddlers were relieved of their disabilities, and allowed to enjoy their own again. The king's return, indeed, had a most important effect upon both music and the drama. Choral services were re-established in the churches, and a new kind of ecclesiastical music was introduced. The violin now began to take rank among musical instruments. It was summoned from the tavern to the concert-room. Viols of various sizes, specially tuned, were now joined with lutes, harps, cornets, and pipes, to complete a numerous orchestra. "A concert of viols" became a technical term in music. Charles the Second, in imitation of Louis the fourteenth, established a band of violins. Tom Durfey's song of Four-and-twenty fiddlers all in a row, published in his Pills to Purge Melancholy, was written in ridicule of the famous band of the French king, which Lully conducted. Charles the Second's band was led by Thomas Baltzar, from Lubeck, accounted by Anthony Wood, himself a skilled performer, "the most famous artist for the violin that the world had yet

produced." Upon Baltzar's death in 1663, John Banister, who had been taught by his father, one of the waits of the parish of St. Giles-in-the-fields, was appointed conductor of the king's band of violins. He incurred the loss of his office, however, and the royal displeasure, for asserting that the English violins were superior to the French. The fact that not half the musicians of France were at this time able to play at sight, was some warrant for Banister's statement. But in addition to the leader of the violins, a master or director of the king's music was also employed. After the Restoration, Matthew Lock filled this office.

Fiddlers were long contemptuously regarded, however, nothwithstanding the promotion they had obtained from King Charles. Dryden, in his Absolom and Achitophel, writing of the Duke of Buckingham—

> A man so various that he seemed to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
> Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong,
> Was everything by starts, and nothing long,
> But in the course of one revolving moon,
> Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon—

clearly did not employ the term fiddler in a complimentary sense. But the fiddlers were becoming of more and more importance. They figured prominently in theatrical orchestras, appearing on the stage, presumably, in those old-fashioned comedies which were wont to terminate with a general dance of all the

characters. "Od zooks, here's a great deal of good company," says Wilful at the last moment of The Double Gallant. "Ho! and it's a shame the fiddles should be idle all this while." "Oh, by no means," cries Careless. "Come, strike up, gentlemen!" And the stage direction is, "they dance." And so Sir Oliver Outwit exclaims at the end of The Rival Fools: "I'll let the world see thou hast a wise man to thy father. Give me the writing. There's my hand to it. And now strike up music!" John Banister, a son of Charles the Second's violinist, was a member of William the Third's band, and played the first violin at Drury-lane Theatre, "as well when the opera was first performed there as ordinarily."

Little cordiality was wont to prevail, however, between the actors and the orchestra. Parke, the oboe-player, in his Musical Memoirs, notes that the jealousy of actors in regard to the musicians had become "proverbial," and that the managers were only anxious that the orchestra should be of a certain number, and were indifferent as to the skill of the instrumentalists employed. The salaries of the musicians had been much reduced at this time, "a saving system" had indeed been in operation for some years; performers of superior ability declined to remain in the orchestra. The tragedians were especially disposed to be scornful in regard to the

fiddlers. Parke relates that, when the famous violinist, the elder Cramer, appeared at the Liverpool theatre in the course of a grand musical festival, and received peals of applause on account of his admirable performance of a concerto, Stephen Kemble, eminent rather for the size of his body than the scope of his mind, came from behind the scenes, opened the stage-door, and observed the musician with astonished eyes; then turning to those about him, he said with a vacant stare, "What can all this mean?" It was inconceivable to the actor that a mere fiddler should be so applauded! So when, under John Kemble's management at Covent-Garden, Weippert, the excellent harpist, was specially engaged to perform during the Ossianic ballet of Oscar and Malvina, and required for his services the moderate payment of one guinea per night: "What," cried Kemble, who was in receipt of a salary of seventy-five pounds a week, a guinea a night! "Does the man want an estate?" But to the actor the musician always seemed a subordinate creature, and as Parke, at the expense of his own profession, curiously apologises for the tragedians, "it must be considered that, during the early part of their career, they were, perhaps, accustomed to see only one miserable drunken fiddler in the orchestra of the provincial theatres they were attached to, whose excesses induced an unconquerable aversion to the whole musical

race." Macready declared, "I can make nothing of your musical fools!" As a manager, he had been much vexed by the failure of his efforts to combine the performance of opera with the representation of the legitimate drama. He announced, on his undertaking the management of Covent-garden in 1837, that, "as English opera had become an essential part of the amusements of a metropolitan audience, he had been anxious to procure the aid of native musical talent, and trusted he had succeeded in his engagements with composers, singers, and instrumental performers." But his own opinion of opera he has left on record in his journals. He writes in 1842: "Went to see Norma. Miss A. Kemble played Norma. It was a very, very clever performance, entitled to the highest praise for the skill and energy with which it is done; but oh heavens! an opera! That human beings can be found to disregard Shakespeare, and run after such nonsense! What must be the nature of a medium of expression that strips every comedy of its laughter, and every tragedy of its pathos?" However, he could admire Malibran and Schroeder Devrient, while he denounced "opera acting" as a system of "unnatural gesticulation, and redundant holding up arms and beating of breasts." Paganini, too, he could admire, noting his surprising power over his instru-

ment; "the tones he draws from it might be thought those of the sweetest flageolet and hautboy, and sometimes of the human voice; the expression he gives to a common air is quite charming. His playing of St. Patrick's Day was the sweetest piece of instrumental music I ever heard. But," he concludes, dismissing the violinist from his thoughts, "he is a quack!"

The tragedians have usually been indifferent to music. Garrick was wont to confess himself inferior to Barry; he could not sing a song, or tell an Irish story, as Barry could. Quin must have been something of a singer, however; for he was originally allotted the part of Captain Macheath in The Beggars' Opera, although he prudently relinquished it in favour of Tom Walker. John Kemble, impersonating Richard Cœur de Lion, contrived to sing a romance from behind his prison bars, to a loud accompaniment of French horns. "I did not think much of the vocal powers of the royal captive," noted Michael Kelly. Edmund Kean seems to have been a singer of some pretence. Hazlitt, while leaving it to be settled by "the connoisseurs and the ladies" whether Kean sang well or ill, describes his voice as clear, full, and sweet to a degree of tenderness; adding, "but we should have liked him better if he had displayed fewer of the graces and intricacies of the art." Elliston, who, however,

shone more in comedy than in tragedy, played upon the violin with considerable skill. On a memorable occasion, his acquirement in this respect was of service to him, as well as to his royal patron, George the Third.

Weymouth was long the king's favourite resort for repose and fresh air. He was accustomed to stroll unattended about the streets and terraces of the small but select watering-place, and he liberally patronised its theatre—indeed it may be said that the good-natured monarch patronised plays and players wherever he found them. In the course of one of his afternoon walks he had been overtaken by a shower of rain, when, the door of the theatre standing open, he entered, and, finding no one in attendance, he quietly made his way to the royal box, and seated himself in his accustomed chair. The performances of the evening, it may be stated, were announced to be for the benefit of Mr. Elliston; and his majesty had promised to attend and support, by his presence, the efforts of the actor he greatly admired.

He was a trifle fatigued, perhaps, and the dim light of the empty theatre and the easy chair induced drowsiness. In a few moments the king was fast asleep. Meantime Lord Townshend sought his royal master in various directions, but in vain. He had dined at three o'clock, and quitted the palace shortly after dinner; he had not been seen since, and

the queen and the princesses were somewhat uneasy about him, for it was now five o'clock. His lordship even made enquiry of Elliston, who was quietly proceeding to the theatre to make arrangements for the performances of the night; but Elliston could give no information; he had seen nothing of the king.

Arrived at the theatre, however, the actor was not long before he discovered the figure of a man asleep in the king's chair. He had, indeed, entered the box to assure himself that all was prepared for the occupation of his royal patron. For a moment he did not recognise the sleeper, and he was about to disturb his slumbers abruptly enough. Fortunately he discovered in time that he stood in the presence of the king. What was he to do? He dared not wake his majesty by touching him; he feared even to speak to him. It was clear, however, that something must be done; it was nearly time for lighting the lamps—and then the anxiety of the queen and the princesses had to be considered. Elliston hit upon this expedient. He took up a violin from the orchestra, and placing himself immediately under the royal box, he struck up God save the King. Success attended his efforts. The king stirred, and presently springing up, exclaimed: "What! what! Oh, yes! I see, Elliston. Ha! ha! rain came on—took a seat—took a nap. What's o'clock?"

"Nearly six, your majesty."

"Six! Six o'clock!" cried the king. "Send to her majesty—say I'm here. Stay, stay, this wig won't do, eh—eh? Don't keep the people waiting. Light up—light up. Let 'em in—let 'em in. Ha! ha! fast asleep. Play well to-night, Elliston—great favourite with the queen. Let 'em in—let 'em in."

At the close of the performance Elliston attended his royal visitors to their carriage, when the king, still occupied with his adventure of the afternoon, nodded and smiled as he whispered to the actor: "Fast asleep, eh, Elliston! Fast asleep!"

There are artists who have appeared with almost equal credit upon the stage and in the orchestra. One of these has described, with much graphic force, his early experiences both as an actor and a fiddler. He was sadly in want of employment and of bread. Learning that the Croydon Theatre was about to be opened for a short season, he applied to the manager for an engagement. He was asked, of course, what could he do? Walking gentleman. "Full." Little business and utility. "Full." Harlequin and dancing. "Didn't do pantomime or ballet; besides, didn't care for male dancers, their legs didn't draw." Could a place be found for him in the orchestra? "Well," said the manager, with a suspicious look, "just now you were a walking gentleman." The applicant explained that he had

received a musical education, and that necessity sometimes compelled him to turn it to account. "What's your instrument?" "Violin, tenor, violoncello, double bass, and double drums. A violin was brought, that the fiddler might give a taste of his quality. He began Tartini's Devil's Sonata, but after a few bars the manager stopped him, expressed satisfaction, and engaged him as leader at a salary of a guinea per week.

"I felt myself plucked out of the slough of despond. I had others to support. I had to board myself and to get out of debt. I resolved to walk to Croydon—ten miles—every day to rehearsal, and back to Shoreditch after the performance, on twopence per day—one pennyworth of oatmeal and one pennyworth of milk—and I did it for six weeks; Sundays excepted, when I indulged in the luxuries of shin of beef and ox-cheek." The visitors to the Croydon gallery were ill-mannered enough to pelt the orchestra with mutton pies. The fiddlers were at first very indignant; but upon reflection they thought it prudent, their hunger being considerable, to collect the fragments of rather heavy pastry and eat them under the stage. At the end of six weeks the leader was asked to give his specimen of his skill as a dancer, with a view to his engagement as harlequin at the Queen's Theatre, Tottenham-court-road, since called the Prince of Wales's Theatre. "I

essayed the task, buoyed up with hope," continues our fiddler, "dashed on the stage, got through the double shuffle, the toe-and-heel, feeling very faint the while; but at last, despite every effort, I broke down from sheer exhaustion of strength, consequent upon a near approach to starvation, and I burst into an agony of tears." An engagement followed as walking gentleman and harlequin, and the fiddler made his appearance in London as Henry Morland in 'The Heir-at-law'—which, to avoid legal difficulties, was called 'The Lord's Warming-Pan.' From the Tottenham-street Theatre he went to the English Opera House, now known as The Lyceum; from there to Drury-lane, to The Haymarket, to Covent-garden, The Adelphi. His success was not immediate. "During that long period I did not, like Cæsar, thrice refuse the crown; but I thrice left the stage in despair of ever arriving at eminence—for to my thinking not to be something was to be nothing." When at last his opportunity arrived he "had started and was doing well as a bookseller, being versed in old and rare literature." In 1825 he was summoned, upon the sudden illness of Harley, to undertake his part of Pompey in 'Measure for Measure.' "I met with a very cold reception, but the audience warmed to me at the end of my first scene. At the termination of the great tale Pompey has to tell, three distinct rounds of applause greeted

the poor unknown player; and the courage I had screwed up at this point sunk into my shoes, and I could scarcely carry them off. All the great actors came round me, I was led in a sort of triumph into the first green-room, which my salary did not entitle me to enter, and the press pronounced my performance the great hit of the evening. It is impossible for any one to comprehend my excited feelings."

Thenceforward the poor fiddler prospered as an actor, and became known to fame as Benjamin Webster.

CHAPTER VI.

AMATEUR ACTORS.

In taking account of certain amateurs who have from time to time played at being players,—strutted and fretted upon the stage, not for dear life, but out of pure love of strutting and fretting—donned Richard's hunch or Hamlet's inky cloak, and "stormed and straddled, stamped and stared,

'To show the world how Garrick did *not* act—'"

an old story, which narrates how Oliver Cromwell once, in his salad days, trod the boards, and split the ears of the groundlings, or struck them to the soul by the cunning of his art, may be regarded as worthy of repetition and some consideration.

In Mr. Dodsley's Collection of Old Plays, 'Lingua; or, the Combat of the Tongue and the Five Senses for Superiority,' is, on the authority of Winstanley, ascribed to Anthony Brewer, an author who lived in the time of Charles I., and also produced 'The Countrie

Girl' (1647), a comedy, and 'The Love-Sick King, an English Tragical History, with the Life and Death of Cartesmunda, the Fair Nun of Winchester' (1655). 'Lingua,' though it is described as "A Pleasant Comedie," is rather a Masque, or Morality, and represents a contention among the Senses for the possession of a crown. The play is said to have been performed at Cambridge when Oliver Cromwell, then undergraduate of Sidney College, played the part of *Tactus*, or *Touch*. This could hardly have been the first production of 'Lingua' on the stage, however, as the play was in print at least as early as 1607, and was clearly a popular work enough, six editions of it having been published at various dates previous to 1657. Cromwell was not entered at Cambridge until 1616, when he was seventeen years of age. It may be, therefore, that his performance of *Tactus* took place, if at all, during his school-days at Huntingdon, and before he went up to the University.

Tactus is one of the chief characters in this very curious play. His dress is thus described: "a dark-coloured satin mantle over a pair of silk bases; a garland of bays mixed with white and red roses; upon a black grogram, a faulchion, buskins," &c. In an early scene he finds the crown which is the subject of contention among the various characters. He exclaims—

Do I not sleep and dream of this good luck, ha? . . .
No, I am awake and feel it now:
Mercury, all's mine own: here's none to cry half's mine . . . .
Was ever man so fortunate as I?

and then proceeds, probably tearing away his garland:

Roses and bays pack hence: this crown and robe
My bows and body circles and invests;
How gallantly it fits me; sure the slave
Measured my head that wrought this coronet.
They lie that say complexions cannot change:
My blood's ennobled, and I am transformed
Unto the sacred temper of a king.
Methinks I hear my noble parasites
Stiling me Cæsar, or great Alexander;
Licking my feet, and wondering where I got
This precious ointment: how my pace is mended!
How princely do I speak! how sharp I threaten!
Peasants, I'll curb your headstrong impudence,
And make you tremble when the lion roars,
Ye earthbred worms! &c., &c.

If Cromwell played *Tactus*, of course he spoke this speech; and, speaking it—declare the good people who delight in tracing "mighty contests" back to "trivial things," and moreover see so very much further into milestones than their neighbours—his soul was at once fired with a guilty ambition. He was "excited from the possession of an imaginary crown to stretch his views to that of a real one, for the accomplishment of which he was contented to wade through seas of blood, and 'shut the gates of mercy on mankind.'" Thus occurred the original bending of the twig which was subsequently to result in the inclining of the whole tree. So runs the story—a curious one and old, difficult

to trace to its source; "too vague," as a critic says of it, "to be depended upon and too ridiculous either to establish or refute." It is very well to consider the child as the father of the man; but still it is possible to father too much upon the child. The legend is set forth here as some excuse for registering Cromwell's name in a list of amateur players of note. We turn to others whose right to be so enrolled can be more satisfactorily ascertained.

Milton wrote his 'Comus' for an amateur performance at Ludlow Castle by the sons and daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater. The masque was founded upon a real occurrence. Travelling through Heywood Forest in Herefordshire, Lady Alice Egerton was accidentally separated from her brothers, and for a time benighted and lost. On this slight incident the poet built his beautiful 'Comus.' Appropriate music was added by Henry Lawes, who was clerk of the cheque and of the private music to King Charles I. The performance took place on Michaelmas night, 1634. Lawes assisted Lord Brackley, Mr. Egerton, and lady Alice in the representation, by appearing in the character of the attendant spirit, who appears before the brothers habited like a shepherd, and is by them called Thirsis. When, a hundred years later, 'Comus' was produced upon the stage of Drury Lane, Lawes's music was rejected,

and new accompaniments were composed for the occasion by Dr. Arne.

At Somerset House, called Denmark House in 1616, by command of James I., Anne, his Queen, and her maids of honour, were wont to keep up a continual masquerade, "appearing in various dresses, and transforming themselves," greatly to the delight of the Court; and at the Christmas revels of 1632–3, Queen Henrietta Maria took part in a masque. Unfortunate Mr. Prynne the next day published his 'Histriomastix,' with some severe remarks affecting the characters of "women actors," and for his fanatical attempts at stage reform, and his alleged attack upon the Queen and Court, paid penalties—in the way of losing his ears.

The Banqueting House, Whitehall, was at one time the scene of a remarkable performance. Nat Lee's tragedy of 'Mithridates, King of Pontus,' was represented by "persons of the first rank;" the part of *Semandra* being sustained by no less a lady than the Princess Anne, afterwards Queen of England. Her Royal Highness was instructed in her dramatic duties by Mr. Joseph Ashbury, prompter and manager on the occasion. An actor of distinction, famed for his *Don Quixote*, who had held the office of Master of the Revels in Ireland under five sovereigns: Charles II., James II., William III., Queen Anne, and George I., Ashbury had been educated at

Eton; he carried a pair of colours in the Duke of Ormond's army, and was one of the officers who seized upon, and held Dublin Castle on behalf of Charles II. He deserved well of royalty, and was in high favour throughout his long life.

Crown's masque of 'Calisto, or the Chaste Nymph,' written for performance at Court in 1675, had the support of a very strong company of amateur players. The two princesses, Mary and Anne, took part in the representation, and the Duke of Monmouth appeared among the dancers. Jupiter was played by Lady Wentworth and Mercury by Sarah Jennings afterwards famous as the Duchess of Marlborough.

Amateur performances had become fashionable under the first two Georges, who, notwithstanding their imperfect acquaintance with the language, and their protracted absences from the country, were yet patrons of the national drama. George the Second was at Drury Lane Theatre, when the despatches from his darling son, the Duke of Cumberland, brought news of the victory of Culloden. The king stood up with streaming eyes, and loudly thanked God, and announced the victory to his people. The band, by Garrick's orders, at once played "God save the King," the whole audience joining enthusiastically in the chorus. Frederick, Prince of Wales, had steadily encouraged the private

performance of plays at Clifden and Leicester Houses. On the 4th of January, 1749, the children of his Royal Highness, with the aid of some of the younger members of the nobility, represented the tragedy of 'Cato,' before a very distinguished audience. This was at Leicester House, and the performance was under the direction of Mr. Quin, the great tragedian. Prince George was *Portius*; Prince Edward, *Juba*; Master Nugent, *Cato*; Master Montague, *Lucius*; Lord Northson, *Syphax*; Master Evelyn, *Sempronius*; Lord Milsington, *Decius*; and Master Madden, *Marcus*; while the Princess Augusta was *Marcia*, and the Princess Elizabeth, *Lucia*. Before the rising of the curtain, Prince George, then eleven years old, delivered an appropriate prologue. After the tragedy an epilogue was spoken by Prince Edward. That Mr. Quin was proud of his pupil, Prince George, we may gather from the well-known story of the actor exclaiming triumphantly; "Ah; *I* taught the boy to speak:" when, as George the Third, the young man was delivering his first speech from the throne.

The tragedy of 'Cato' long enjoyed the admiration of the world; and, with 'The Beggar's Opera,' divided the favour of the drawing-room players. At Westminster School a prize of a gilt Horace was at one time offered for the best Latin translation of Cato's soliloquy in the fifth act; and Cumber-

land, in his Memoirs, describes an amateur performance of the tragedy at his school at Bury St. Edmund's, under the mastership of the Rev. Arthur Kinsman, a Trinity College man, who formed his scholars upon the system of Westminster. The custom of performing a play of Terence's before the Christmas holidays had been lately discontinued. Some of the boys, probably not without the connivance of the master, had therefore determined to get up a performance of 'Cato' at one of the boarding-houses, and to invite the gentry of the town to be present. A full-bottomed periwig was provided for Cato; it was *de rigueur* in those days, that not only Cato, but all heroes of tragedy should appear in full-bottomed periwigs; while female attire for *Marcia* and *Lucia* was borrowed from the servant maids of the lodging-house. The performance seems to have been singularly bad. Mr. Kinsman, the master, was so far provoked by its inferiority, as to bestow many hearty buffets upon the *Marcia* of the company, who towered above her sex in the person of a most ill-favoured and wry-necked boy. The rest of the *dramatis personæ* were sentenced to the fine of an imposition. For Mr. Cumberland, who had been entrusted with the part of *Juba*, the tenth satire of Juvenal was his share of the penalty inflicted.

In the year 1751, certain eminent amateurs conceived a very ambitious project. They

desired to play in a regular theatre—they were weary of the limited appliances of the eternal back drawing-room and the curtained hall. They would be content with nothing less than the hiring of Drury Lane Theatre, and the performance there of one of Shakspeare's plays. Foote is said to have suggested to Sir Francis Delaval, "that as he was fond of the stage, and a good performer, it would be turning his talents to some account to get up a creditable play with himself and his friends in the chief characters." Sir Francis jumped at the idea. That it promised to be costly in its carrying out was not the least of his recommendations to one who so dearly loved extravagant expenditure. Application was made to Garrick for the use of his theatre, "for one night only." *Roscius*, for a consideration, was nothing loth to oblige his noble and influential suitors.

The play fixed upon was 'Othello;' cast in the following manner: *Othello*, Sir Francis Delaval; *Iago*, John Delaval, Esq. (afterwards Lord Delaval); *Cassio*, — Delaval, Esq.; *Brabantio* and *Ludovico*, Sim Fine, Esq.; *Roderigo*, Captain Stephen; *Desdemona*, Mrs. Quon (sister to Sir Francis, and afterwards Lady Mexborough); and *Emilia*, Mrs. Stevens. The performance took place on the 7th of March. The theatre was closed on the previous evening for a rehearsal, and an advertisement appeared announcing the postpone-

ment of the play of 'Alfred,' by Thomson and Mallett, which had then been reproduced in an expensive style—"the theatre being engaged to some gentlemen and ladies for private play."

Kirkman in his "Life of Macklin," gives a very flattering account of the Delaval performance. But then Kirkman has in quite an exaggerated measure a biographer's zeal for his subject.* Macklin had been engaged to teach and superintend the amateurs; and in their success Kirkman finds "an incontestable proof of Mr. Macklin's eminence in theatrical instruction." Horace Walpole, however, as unsympathetic and coolly critical a witness as could be called upon to give evidence, may be quoted in favour of the success of the representation. He wrote to Sir Horace Mann; "There have been two events, not political, equal to any absurdities or follies of former years." One of these had reference to the introduction into Smollett's 'Peregrine Pickle' of Lady Vane's 'Memoirs of her own Life.' "The other is a play acted by people of some fashion at Drury Lane, hired on purpose. They really acted so well that it is astonishing they should not have had sense enough not to act at all. You would know none of their names should I tell you; but the chief were a family of Delavals, the

* Kirkman, moreover, was reputed to be a natural son of Macklin.

eldest of which was married by one Foote, a player, to Lady Nassau Poulett. . . . The rage was so great to see the performance, that the House of Commons literally adjourned at three o'clock on purpose; the footmen's gallery was strung with blue ribands. What a wise people! What an august senate! Yet my Lord Granville once told the Prince, I forget on occasion of what folly, 'Sir, indeed your Royal Highness is in the wrong to act thus; the English are a grave nation!'"

The grave nation certainly went rather mad about the Delavals' 'Othello.' It was said that while only a thousand spectators could possibly witness the performance, there were twenty thousand who were anxious to obtain admission into the theatre. The tickets were for no specified part of the house, but the first comers had the choice of the best places. It was this arrangement probably that drove the stars and ribands—the grandest people being the last to arrive—to the upper galleries. Of the Royal Family, their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, the Princess Amelia, Prince George, and Princess Augusta, occupied the stage-box; and the house in its every corner glittered with jewels and lace. A fine band of music was provided; the theatre was brilliantly illuminated with wax candles; new and beautiful scenery was expressly painted for the occasion; "and the dresses," says Mr.

Kirkman, "were not only magnificent but well-fancied and adapted to the characters. *Othello's* was a robe in the fashion of his country; *Roderigo's* an elegant modern suit; and *Cassio's* and *Iago's* very rich uniforms."

Sir Francis, in *Othello* won golden opinions. His embracing *Desdemona* on their meeting in Cyprus was said to have "set many a fair breast among the audience a palpitating." His expressions of anguish were found to be truly affecting. His bursts of vengeful passion very moving. But when in the last act he addresses *Cassio* with the words, "I do believe it—and I ask your pardon;" the manner in which he took the hand of his injured lieutenant, "had something in it so like the man of honour, and so unlike all imitation, that the audience could not be easily reconciled afterwards to the hearing it from anybody else." Mr. John Delaval, as *Iago*, "was perfectly the character that Shakspeare drew." He delighted and astonished his audience; his deportment was elegant, his eye worked as much as his tongue, and he was equally intent on his plots when engaged in the dialogue or when silent upon the stage. The younger Mr. Delaval gained great applause in *Cassio*. His drunken scene and sudden recovery of sobriety were made natural by his manner of treating them. *Desdemona's* good looks and native modesty of character, charmed the audience exceedingly. "The performers were

all perfect in their parts, and what is seldom observed by the best experienced actors, they were, through the play, constant in their attention and characteristic in their manners. Their elocution was natural and easy, free from the whine, the cant, the clap trap trick, and the false consequence so often hackneyed upon the stage." Altogether, Mr. Kirkman concludes, the occasion was one of great honour to Mr. Macklin and his pupils—their triumph was in fact *his*.

The expenses of the entertainment, including £150 paid to Mr. Garrick for the hire of the house, amounted to upwards of a thousand pounds. The streets and avenues about Drury Lane were so blockaded with coaches and chairs that many distinguished ladies and gentlemen were compelled to tramp through the mire to the theatre, affording much diversion to the mob assembled, and great benefit to the pickpockets. The crowd indeed was so intense that the public-houses in the neighbourhood of the theatre were said to have swarmed with "stars and garters," waiting until some lull in the popular excitement should give an opportunity of reaching the doors of Drury Lane in safety.

Foote, presenting himself in the green-room after the play was concluded, was overwhelmed with reproaches. "Where had he been? Why had he not come sooner? Did he know what he had missed?—a performance

such as he would never have another opportunity of seeing!" and so on. The mimic bowing humbly, signified his contrition and disappointment. Then approaching Garrick, he asked in a loud whisper, "What he *seriously* thought of it all?" Garrick, probably to flatter the patrician amateurs, affected a jealousy he was far from feeling, and answered in equally audible tones—"Think of it! Why I never suffered so much in my whole life!" "What!" cried Foote. "Ah! I see—*for the author*. Alas, poor Shakspeare!" The laugh was unanimous against Garrick; and even Sir Francis and his playfellows joined in it, though not unaffected by the jest. A grand ball and supper closed the entertainments of the evening.

Sir Francis Delaval ended a very irregular life in the summer of 1772. He had been dining at the house of his brother-in-law, Lord Mexborough; taking a good deal of ice after a very hearty dinner, he felt himself suddenly and painfully chilled, and called for a rummer of brandy, which he drank off at once. He was almost immediately seized with convulsions, and fell from his chair senseless. Carried to his own house, though every possible assistance was rendered, he died in a few hours. Foote was said to have been genuinely affected at the loss of his friend and boon companion. He retired to his own room and saw no company for three days. Then he

inquired when the funeral would take place. "Not for a week," he was informed, "as the surgeons intended to open Sir Francis's head." "What for? What do they expect to find *there?*" cried the inveterate jester. "I'm sure I've known poor Frank these five-and-twenty years, and I never could find anything in it."

Yet, frivolous, indolent, wasteful, and dissolute as was Sir Francis, he was not deficient in either wit or learning. Though he seemed bent on being the man foremost in folly of his age, could stoop to the lowest pleasures, would do anything provided only it was eccentric and extravagant, he could be serious upon occasion; and he once replied to Lord Chatham in the House of Commons with singular point and promptitude. Mr. Pitt had attacked certain opinions of Sir Francis, as savouring too much of "the buffoonery of the stage." Sir Francis replied that "if *once* performing a character on the stage could be imputed to him as an act of buffoonery, he must plead guilty to the charge; but this he could say in his own justification, and he wished it could equally apply to the right honourable gentleman who had spoken last, that it was the *only part* he had ever played in his life."

Not many amateur actors could hope to parallel the splendour and the glory of the Delaval performances. Their success, however

unquestionable, was yet purchased at a price which few purses could afford. For some years little was heard of private performances: the amateurs seem to have been content with the fame they had acquired. Probably the death of their chief patron, the Prince of Wales, within a few days of the Delaval representation, somewhat dashed their spirits and quenched their ambition. It was not until the year 1790 that a worthy rival to Sir Francis Delaval appeared upon the scene. The madcap Earl of Barrymore was then amazing the world with his dissipation and prodigality. Amongst his other extravagances he had taken to the stage, but, unlike his prototype Sir Francis, he favoured the sock rather than the buskin—he preferred 'Scrub' to 'Othello'—delighted in the eccentricities of low comedy, broad farce, and burlesque. Horace Walpole writes to the Earl of Strafford on the 12th of August, 1790:—"Last night the Earl of Barrymore was so humble as to perform a buffoon dance and act 'Scaramouch' in a pantomime at Richmond, for the benefit of Edwin, junior, the comedian; and I, like an old fool, but calling myself a philosopher that loves to study human nature in all disguises, went to see the performance."

A private theatre had been erected at Wargrave, his lordship's seat in Berkshire, and in the following month 'The Follies of a Day,'

a translation of 'Le Mariage de Figaro,' by Beaumarchais, was performed. "His lordship in the character of the gardener," according to the newspapers, "was highly comic, and his humour was not overstrained. The whole concluded with a dance, in which was introduced a favourite 'pas Russe' by Lord Barrymore and Mr. Delpini (the clown), which kept the theatre in a roar." It was soon after this the earl was inviting Mr. John Bannister, of Drury Lane, to visit Wargrave.

"DEAR BANNISTER,—The Duke of Cumberland being dead and your theatre shut on that account, will you come down for a day or two this week? Our plays are Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. You can have no excuse, my good boy: so pray let me see you. You shall have the great bed and every other necessary commodity. I daresay you are in high spirits at this national misfortune; for now it's all holiday with you. Ah! friend, all work and *no play* makes *Jack* a dull boy.—Ever yours sincerely, "BARRYMORE."

Then follows a postscript—perhaps the most important part of his lordship's letter:—

"I assure you our theatre is really elegant. (Turn over, for God's sake!) We play 'Try Again' the last night of our performances: you would oblige me exceedingly if you would procure me the dress you wore, and also the

Walloon uniform—which I will take great care of—of Colman."

Even more than Mr. Bannister's presence, it may be, his lordship desired Mr. Bannister's dress, and the Walloon uniform of Colman.

The theatre at Wargrave was said to have cost upwards of sixty thousand pounds, and was, of course, the most splendidly appointed private stage in the kingdom. The following plays were performed there: 'The Constant Couple,' 'Every Man in his Humour,' 'The Rivals,' 'The Follies of a Day,' 'The Beaux Stratagem,' 'The Battle of Hexham,' 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' 'Hob in the Well,' 'Miss in her Teens,' 'The Padlock,' 'The Guardian,' 'The Apprentice,' 'The Mayor of Garratt,' 'The Poor Soldier,' 'The Midnight Hour,' and the pantomimes of 'Robinson Crusoe,' 'Don Juan,' and 'Blue Beard.' The performances, however, were not wholly supported by amateurs; it became necessary to engage professional assistance to strengthen the *casts* of many of the plays, and several actors from the regular theatres were engaged to appear upon the Wargrave stage, among others the Palmers, the Bannisters, Incledon, Johnstone, Munden, and Moses Kean. Masquerades on a very grand scale concluded the entertainments, and it seems to have been a rule of the house that no guest of Lord Barrymore's should ever retire to rest before five in the morning. His lordship's favourite charac-

ters were *Scrub*, *Bobadil*, *Hob*, and *Gregory Gubbins*. He was reputed to be the best gentleman jockey and coachman in the country, and made large profits on the turf. At the card table he was less fortunate, though a not very creditable story is told of his winning enormous sums from Mr. Fox, on one occasion at Newmarket, when that statesman happened to wear highly-polished steel buttons on his coat, which reflected, as in a glass, the cards he held in his hand. His lordship was at one time a candidate for representing the borough of Reading in Parliament, but was defeated by a small majority after a severe contest. He was only twenty-four years of age when he met his death, 1793, by the accidental explosion of his musket as he sat in his curricle. He was at the time engaged with a detachment of his regiment, the Berkshire Militia, in escorting a party of French prisoners from Rye to Dover. In the same year a brief memoir of his life was published by John Williams, better known under his pseudonym of Anthony Pasquin, a sufficiently scurrilous writer, who, however, had found his advantage probably in flattering the young lord, and on this occasion ventured upon a somewhat ill-directed panegyric. In Bell's "British Theatre" (1791), may be found a spirited engraving of a painting from life by De Wilde, representing "The Right Hon. the Earl of Barrymore and Captain Wathen as

Scrub and *Archer* in Farquhar's 'Beaux Stratagem.'"

George Farquhar himself is deserving of a note among amateur players, for though on his expulsion from Trinity College, Dublin, he had planned to gain his bread as an actor, he trod the boards for too brief a period to warrant his being regarded as a regular member of the histrionic profession. He suffered severely from nervousness and stage fright, and personating *Guyomar* in Dryden's play of 'The Indian Emperor,' he accidentally stabbed *Vasquez* the Spanish general with a real rapier instead of a foil, and placed the life of his brother player in some peril. This unfortunate occurrence affected Farquhar so seriously that he never ventured to present himself upon the stage again as an actor. Among other authors who have attempted to turn players but with little success, may be enumerated OTWAY, who appeared on one occasion as the *King* in Mrs. Behn's 'Forced Marriage,' but who, we read, "not being used to the stage, was put into a tremendous agony and spoilt for an actor;" NAT LEE, who undertook *Duncan*, and one or two other characters, but failed to please the public; and RICHARD SAVAGE, who appeared as *Sir Thomas Overbury* in his own tragedy of that name, by which performance "he gained no great reputation," says Dr. Johnson, "the theatre being a province for which nature

seems not to have designed him; for neither his voice, look, nor gesture were such as were expected on the stage; and he was so much ashamed of having been reduced to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from the list when a copy of his tragedy was to be shown to his friends." To these may be added O'KEEFE, the author of 'Wild Oats,' 'The Castle of Andalusia,' and some score of other comedies and operas, who was for some time on the stage as an actor before he discovered that he could as an author turn to better account his abilities; and ARTHUR MURPHY, the translator of 'Tacitus,' and the writer of 'The Way to Keep Him,' 'All in the Wrong,' 'The Orphan of China,' and many favourite plays, who attempted to represent 'Othello' at Covent Garden in 1754, and remained a member of the theatrical profession for a season or two, when he became satisfied that he was not likely to gain distinction as a player, and formally renounced the stage. In more recent times it may be remembered that the late Mr. Sheridan Knowles trod the boards as *Master Walter* in his own 'Hunchback,' and other characters, but with only tolerable success.

The beautiful Countess of Craven, who was to be subsequently known to the world as the Margravine of Anspach, had given two or three pieces to the regular theatres before

she appeared, both as authoress and actress, on the stage of the private theatre attached to Brandenburg House, Hammersmith—the house to be afterwards memorable as the residence of the sinning and sinned against Caroline of Brunswick. "My taste for music and poetry," says the Margravine, a little conceitedly, in her very curious memoirs, "and my style of imagination in writing, chastened by experience, were great sources of delight to me. I wrote 'The Princess of Georgia' and 'The Twins of Smyrna' for the Margrave's theatre, besides 'Nourjad,' and several other pieces; and for these I composed various airs in music. I invented *fêtes* to amuse the Margravine, which afforded me a charming contrast to accounts, bills, and the changes of domestics and chamberlains, and many other things quite odious to me. We had at Bradenburg House thirty servants in livery, with grooms and a set of sixty horses. Our expenses were enormous," &c.

In the 'Random Records' of George Colman the Younger may be found mention of some remarkable amateur performances at Wynnstay in Denbighshire, the seat of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn. The Wynnstay theatricals were on a scale of great completeness, and were continued annually for nearly forty years, from 1770 to 1808 inclusive. In 1777 the burlesque of 'Chrononhotonthologos' was performed in the presence of Mr.

Garrick—a little more than a year before the death of the great actor. Some of the performances were of an ambitious kind—including Shakspeare's 'Cymbeline,' and Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Rule a Wife and Have a Wife,' in which piece the two Colmans appeared. The theatre had been originally a kitchen, but had been tastefully altered and arranged, and held a sufficiently numerous audience. There were no galleries to the building, which enabled the players to dispense with the glaring footlights of the regular theatre, and to light the stage more naturally from above, by means of an arch of lamps over the heads of the audience, but screened from their sight. Mr. Bunbury, the caricaturist, designed an elegant and whimsical ticket of admission to the performances, to which the gentry, farmers, and tradesmen of the neighbourhood, with their wives and families, were freely admitted; people came even from distances of thirty miles to the theatre, and carriages were in such requisition, it seems, that one night "two *mourning coaches* were to be seen waiting in the park, which had each brought a merry party of six insides." "My father's habits of the shop," writes Colman Junior (Colman Senior was at the time lessee of the Haymarket Theatre), "broke out naturally enough at the first rehearsal. He sat tolerably tranquil for some time, observing the awkwardness of the

amateurs, and their ignorance in the commonest arrangements of the stage; they either crossed behind each other's backs, or ran against one another in the attempt to change sides. At length the under-butler (who, in the dearth of numbers, was made a minor actor), in attempting to deliver a sword to the person he was addressing, did it so very clumsily that the Haymarket manager could bear it no longer. He jumped upon the stage, and snatching the sword out of the man's hands, cried, 'Zounds, sir, can't you do it thus?'—showing him the proper way; but the under-butler was dull, and begged for further directions how to give it. 'How?' said my father. 'Why, as you gave a gravy-spoon to Sir Watkin yesterday at dinner. You did that gracefully enough; I observed you.'" After this Mr. Colman consented to become stage-manager and driller of the whole company.

Mr. Joseph Cradock, who in 1826 published his 'Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs,' appears in his younger days to have acquired considerable reputation as an amateur player. He was the intimate friend of Garrick, whose manner he closely imitated, obtaining the applause of the great actor himself. "I must say," writes Mr. Cradock, "Garrick spoke with great satisfaction of my acting." It had been proposed to represent the plays of the 'Clandestine Marriage,' and 'Hamlet,' at Lord Holland's seat, Kingsgate, near Margate.

In the comedy some alterations were to be made, and Mr. Cradock undertook three characters, that Garrick might have some one to depend upon. In the tragedy, Garrick had consented to appear as the *Ghost* to the *Hamlet* of Mr. Cradock. Roscius had previously played the *Ghost*, on the occasion of the benefit of Holland the actor. "As to myself," writes Mr. Cradock, "I freely declare my *Hamlet*, like Holland's, was a direct imitation of our great original." The destruction of Lord Holland's seat by fire, however, prevented these performances. "Garrick's opinion of my acting," resumes Mr. Cradock, "was unequivocally avowed to the Earl of Pembroke, in these words: 'That if the natural manner of speaking was to be continued as adopted by himself, it must be by Mr. Cradock.' From frequently reading with and attending Garrick, I became a very exact *copyist*. After rehearsing *Edgar* with him in Southampton Street, and having in his eyes got rid of the strut and the bombast, Garrick was pleased to say he disliked rehearsing with me, because he became disgusted with some others." Further on, Mr. Cradock disclaims any credit for originality in his histrionic efforts. He only pretended to imitate Garrick more naturally than Holland did.*

* Of Holland and his imitation of Garrick, Churchill wrote in the 'Rosciad':—

"Next Holland came. With truly tragic stalk,
He creeps, he flies: a hero should not walk.

There was at one time a project to give a representation of 'The Beaux' Stratagem,' at Lichfield, in honour of Garrick and Johnson. Every scene of the comedy is laid at Lichfield. Mr. Cradock was to perform *Archer*, and Dr. Goldsmith excited some amusement by volunteering to play *Scrub*. Garrick and Johnson, however, forbore all ridicule, fully aware that their friend's offer was made in all kindliness. Amateurs and others were to sustain the other characters in the play in good style. The plan does not appear to have been carried into effect.

In November, 1773, Mr. Cradock records some important performances taking place at Kelmarsh, the seat of Mr. Hanbury, in Northamptonshire. 'Venice Preserved,' was produced, Priuli being played by Mr. David Garrick, the nephew of the great Roscius, a young officer, who, with his face painted and overhung with grey locks, was "made up," into a striking resemblance of his uncle. Mr.

As if with heaven he warred, his eager eyes
Planted their batteries against the skies;
Attitude, action, air, pause, start, sigh, groan,
He borrowed and made use of as his own.
By fortune thrown on any other stage,
He might, *perhaps*, have pleased an easy age;
But now appears a copy, and no more,
Of something better we have seen before,
The actor who would build a solid fame,
Must Imitation's servile arts disclaim:
Act for himself—on his own bottom stand;
I hate e'en Garrick thus at second hand."

Cradock was the *Jaffier*, and the *Pierre* of the evening was Mr. G. Cumberland, who wrote a prologue for the occasion.

Sir Thomas Lawrence was certified by Sheridan to be "the best amateur actor in the kingdom." George the Fourth pronounced him "the most finished gentleman in my dominions." Lawrence appeared as an actor at a theatrical *fête* given by the Marquis of Abercorn, in 1803. "Shall I give you an account of it?" writes the painter to his sister. "It was projected by a woman of great cleverness and beauty, Lady Cahir. . . . It was determined to do it in a quiet way, and more as an odd experiment of the talents of the party than anything else; but this and that friend would be offended, and at last it swelled up to a perfect theatre (in a room and a London audience. The Prince, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Lord and Lady Melbourne—their sons of the party—Lord and Lady Essex, Lord and Lady Amherst, with a long *et cetera*, and amongst the rest, Sheridan were present." The plays performed were 'The Wedding Day,' and 'Who's the Dupe?' Lawrence represented *Lord Rakeland* in the one, and *Grainger* in the other. The orchestra was behind the scenes. Lady Harriet Hamilton played the organ, Lady Maria the piano, Lady Catherine the tambourine, the Hon. Mr. Lamb the violoncello; other instrumentalists were hired—"a most perfect orchestra, with

admirable scenery, and light as day. . . The Prince then came in, and of course the orchestra struck up 'God Save the King': then a little terrifying bell rang, the curtain drew up, and 'The Wedding Day' began. At first, I will own to you, Sheridan's face, the grave Duke of Devonshire, and two or three staunch critics, made me feel unpleasantly, for I opened the piece. However, this soon wore off. Our set all played extremely well—like persons of good sense, without extravagance or buffoonery, and yet with sufficient spirit. Lady Cahir, Mr. J. Madox, and G. Lamb were the most conspicuous—the first so beautiful that I felt love-making very easy. A splendid supper closed the business." Lawrence seems to have fancied that the propriety of his joining in the theatricals might be questioned: "You know me too well, dear Anne," he writes, "to believe that I should be of such a scheme under any but very flattering circumstances; as it is, I was right to join in it. Lord Abercorn is an old Jermyn Street* friend—a staunch and honourable one, and particularly kind to me in real services and very flattering distinctions. These all formed one strong reason for joining in the thing; and another secret one was, that whatever tends to heighten a character for general talent (when

* Lawrence, soon after his arrival in London, had occupied lodgings in Jermyn Street, where he was visited by Lord Abercorn.

kept in prudent bounds), is of use to that particular direction of it which forms the pursuit of life. I have gained, then, and not lost by this (to you) singular step. I am not going to be a performer in other families. I stick to Lord Abercorn's; and for the rest I pursue my profession as quietly and more steadily than ever."

Mr. Boaden, in his life of Kemble, records the *début* of a Captain Caulfeild, of the Guards, on the 2nd of February, 1802, at Covent Garden Theatre, in the character of *Hamlet*. His performances had been greatly admired in private circles, and great hopes were entertained of his success in public. But these were disappointed. It was said that he had accustomed himself to consider those who "berattle the common stages" as vulgar, and had conceived a something more *exquisite* as required to denote the gentleman and the prince. But he was found too much of the "curled darling,"—the gentlest thing in nature—for ever attitudinizing and shifting from one elegance of personal display to another. Occasionally, however, he was animated, and even impressive; but his voice failed him under any protracted exertion. He had not the requisite physical qualifications; and, altogether, the Captain was pronounced a failure. His friends, however, encouraged him to make another attempt, and he subsequently undertook the less arduous rôle of

Ranger in Dr. Hoadly's 'Suspicious Husband,' a character requiring rather a gay and gentlemanly bearing, than any great power of lungs. Still he was deficient in force and genuine vivacity—his manner was too slight and small—he was pronounced flat and spiritless—and he retired into private life again, to shine in back drawing-rooms, possibly; but never more to adorn the stage of Covent Garden Theatre, or to attempt competition with the great players of the day.

The failure of Captain Caulfeild may be regarded as a severe blow to the pretensions of amateur players to obtain distinction on the public boards. But a still more serious shock was yet in store for the gentlemen actors. Hitherto they had met with consideration, even generosity, from their audiences: but now they were to become ridiculous in the eyes of the public—now one of their number was to be followed throughout his performance by shouts of the most tumultuous derision. It was on the 9th of February, 1810, that a gentleman, styling himself the Amateur of Fashion, presented himself upon the Bath stage in the character of *Romeo*, greatly to the amazement and diversion of his audience. He was to be known afterwards as "Romeo Coates." He was a West Indian by birth, and apparently about fifty years old, but in reality much younger. His figure was good, though attenuated; but his

face was sallow, wrinkled, wizen, with a cunning expression. In the day-time at all seasons, he appeared covered with furs; at night he assumed a brilliant ball-room suit, with buttons and knee-buckles of diamonds. He was reputed to be enormously rich, and it was announced that the performances of the Amateur of Fashion would only be for charitable purposes.

On the 9th December, 1811, Romeo Coates presented himself before a London audience, and played *Lothario*, at the Haymarket Theatre, for the benefit of a lady. The boxes were crowded with rank and fashion; but there was a great uproar in the house. The amateur addressed the audience, and on the 11th published a letter in the *Morning Herald*, in which he wrote: "In regard to the innumerable attacks that have been made upon my person and lineaments in the public prints, I have only to observe, that as I was fashioned by the Creator independent of my will, I cannot be held responsible for a result I could not control." In 1813 he appeared at Drury Lane on a benefit night, and recited Garrick's occasional address, "Bucks, have at ye all," * amidst much laughter and some disapprobation.

Mr. Coates's performance created so much

* According to O'Keeffe this once favourite address was written by one Thomas Mozeen, an actor, who published a volume of poems in 1762.

sensation, that an appropriate farce was produced at Covent Garden Theatre, in which Mr. Mathews personated *Romeo Rantall*, and held the Amateur of Fashion up to ridicule. The piece had a run, and was invariably received with roars of laughter. In a drawing-room scene *Romeo* amuses the company with recitations from the dramatic poets; he is loudly applauded, and makes a speech after the manner of Mr. Coates: "Cheered by your exhilarating applause, I proceed; but know I possess a soul that scorns to bend to interruption!" He then gives a dying scene—in which he demonstrates great solicitude as to his hat and feather, and is careful to raise his right leg so as to display his diamond shoe-buckle to the best advantage. For a long time *Romeo Rantall* remained one of Mr. Mathews's most popular impersonations.

Of Mr. Coates's manner and appearance, Captain Gronow, in his 'Reminiscences,' has given a spirited account. The captain appears to have seen him at Bath in the character of *Romeo*. The house, crowded to suffocation, welcomed the actor with prolonged laughter and applause. "He came forward with a hideous grin, and made what he considered his bow, which consisted in thrusting his head forward, and bobbing it up and down several times, his body remaining perfectly upright and stiff, like a toy

mandarin with a moveable head." His dress was *outré* in the extreme; whether Spanish, Italian, or English, no one could say; it was like nothing ever worn. In a cloak of sky-blue silk, profusely spangled, red pantaloons, white waistcoat, a very high cravat, a Charles the Second wig, and an opera hat, he presented a figure singularly grotesque. Then his clothes were so tight that he moved with difficulty, until the bursting of a seam in the hinder part of his dress gave somewhat greater freedom to his actions; but the house was anew convulsed with laughter when the results of this accident were perceptible. Unconscious of the cause of the merriment, however, he proceeded with his part in a curious, croaking, guttural voice, and with a complete misapprehension of every passage he delivered. In the balcony scene he stopped to take snuff, turning a deaf ear the while to Juliet's passionate utterances. Upon this, a wag in the gallery bawled out, "I say, Romeo, give us a pinch;" when, in the most affected manner, he walked to the side boxes, and offered the contents of his box first to the gentlemen, and then to the ladies, the while the house greeted him with loud bravoes, which he acknowledged with his usual grin and nod. His dying scene was irresistibly comic. "Out come a dirty silk handkerchief from his pocket, with which he carefully swept the ground; then his opera hat was

carefully placed for a pillow, and down he laid himself. After various tossings about, he seemed reconciled to his position; but the house vociferously bawled out, "Die again, Romeo!" and obedient to the command, he rose up, and went through the ceremony again." He was even about to die a third time, but the Juliet of the night rose from her tomb, and brought the preposterous performance to a close.

For some seasons "the Amateur of Fashion" (or "the celebrated Philanthropic Amateur," as he sometimes dubbed himself) appeared occasionally on the Bath stage. But the audience in time grew weary of laughing at him, and took to hissing him instead; not that he much heeded. So long as he was suffered to appear—now as *Romeo*, now as *Belcour* in the 'West Indian,' now as *Lothario* in the 'Fair Penitent'—his crazy vanity was satisfied. Approval or disapproval was quite a secondary matter. But the management ultimately declined to lend him the stage. The disturbances in the theatre were becoming serious. A report went abroad that there was a little too much method in the madness of Mr. Coates, that his wealth was supposititious, his philanthropy open to question, and that, under pretence of aiding charitable institutions, he was oftentimes putting money in his own purse. He disappeared from the theatre, therefore, to

shine for a while in the Parks, the occupant of a shell-shaped chariot, drawn by white horses, his panels and harness plentifully blazoned with his crest—a cock, with the motto, "While I live I'll crow!"—a mob following him, yelling "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" in his ears. Then he quitted London, and retreated to Boulogne, where he married. He died in March, 1848, at a very advanced age, from injuries received on coming out of the opera house in the Haymarket, when he was accidentally knocked down and run over.

After Mr. Coates's wonderful performances, the efforts of other amateurs seem to be but pale and feeble. One or two brief notes, however, may be added. Mr. Bunn, in his book, 'The Stage, Before and Behind the Curtain,' mentions a Captain Hicks, who, under the pseudonym of Otway, about the year 1837, wearied the managers with incessant applications to be allowed upon the stage. He was possessed to the full of the usual ambition of amateurs. He desired to play *Hamlet*—nothing less. His wish was gratified at last. Mr. Bunn could not be as stubborn in refusing as Captain Hicks was persistent in applying, and the amateur was a gentlemen apparently much respected in private life. It really seemed that his passion could only be cured by indulging it. A night was therefore given him at Covent

Garden Theatre, and the regular company supported his *Hamlet*. There was one stipulation, however: he was on no account, whatever happened, to address the audience as Captain Hicks (or Mr. Otway). He was to confine himself to the words of the Prince of Denmark. The manager foresaw that any accidental breach with the public might be widened by a thoughtless speech from the amateur. In the excitement of his position, however, the captain strayed from his agreement. He proceeded with his part fairly, if not very greatly, until the third act, when some awkwardness in his treatment of the closet scene excited disapprobation and derision among the audience. He addressed the house—cast blame upon the management for not sufficiently rehearsing the play, and for setting the scenes badly—avowed that the fault was not his, and that he had done nothing to merit the censure of the public. The entertainment was brought to a disastrous close, and Captain Hicks appeared no more upon the regular stage.

Among other curiosities of amateur acting may be noted the performances of Captain Harvey Garnett Phipps Tuckett, whose name will be remembered in connection with one of the last of English duels, and the consequent trial by the House of Peers of one of its members concerned as a principal in the affair. The play-goer whose recollection will

carry him back a quarter of a century, may bear in mind Captain Tuckett's appearances as *Falstaff* and a few other characters, at the Lyceum and elsewhere. Much curiosity was evinced at the time, but it had reference to the duellist rather than the actor, whose efforts, indeed, were not very admirable, and who soon outliving the interest he had excited, quitted this country for America, and was seen no more by English audiences. About this time also occurred the repeated attempts of one Barnard Gregory, editor of the most libellous and infamous of newspapers—both editor and newspaper have now, happily, ceased to exist—to obtain a hearing upon the public stage. The scenes of riot and uproar that ensued; the amateur —by no means deficient in histrionic ability, it must be said for him—now endeavouring by his patient demeanour to conciliate, now daring to bandy angry recrimination and abuse with his audience (a royal duke, living here in exile, not the least conspicuous or the least pacific among the player's opponents); but compelled at last to yield before the overwhelming storm of disapproval and disgust, and to abandon efforts that never should have been begun.

To end with a pleasanter topic, let a note be added as to the admirable performances from time to time given by an amateur company of artists and men of letters, with

Charles Dickens at their head. Among the plays represented were Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour'—one scene of which, containing a famous portrait of Mr. Dickens as *Captain Bobadil*, Mr. Leslie's brush has celebrated upon canvas—'Shakspeare's Merry Wives of Windsor,' 'Not so Bad as We seem,' a comedy written by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton expressly for the performances of the amateurs on behalf of the Guild of Literature and Art, and Mr. Wilkie Collins's dramas of 'The Lighthouse' and 'The Frozen Deep.' More memorable amateur performances than these are hardly to be looked for. One representation of Ben Jonson's comedy was given for the benefit of the late Mr. Leigh Hunt. Concerning the benevolent actors on his behalf, Mr. Hunt writes in his autobiography: "If anything had been needed to show how men of letters include actors, on the common principle of the greater including the less, these gentlemen would have furnished it. Mr. Dickens's *Bobadil* had a spirit in it of intellectual apprehension beyond anything the existing stage has shown: his farce throughout was always admirable,—quite rich and filled up; so were the tragical parts in which he subsequently appeared; and Mr. Forster delivered the verses of Ben Jonson with a musical flow and a sense of their grace and beauty unknown, I believe, to the recitation of actors at present,—at least, I have never

heard anything like it since Edmund Kean's. The lines came out of his lips as if he loved them."

Some creditable representations, later in date however, of burlesque and pantomime, for charitable purposes, by societies of gentlemen styling themselves the Fielding and the Savage Clubs respectively, are also worthy of mention in this brief record.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SHAKESPEARE JUBILEE.

THERE was a great cry in Stratford-upon-Avon when the Reverend Mr. Gastrel, a wealthy clergyman, who had become the purchaser of William Shakespeare's house and lands, deliberately hewed down a mulberry tree in the garden, believed to have been planted there by the poet's own hand. The utilitarian minister affirmed that his windows were darkened, his abode rendered damp and comfortless, by reason of the near neighbourhood of the tree. Other accounts allege that "the act of Gothic barbarity," as Boswell calls it, was committed simply to vex the people of Stratford. Dr. Johnson inclined to this view of the affair. Mr. Gastrel went possibly upon the old argument, that he had a right to do what he would with his own. He was not a reader of the poet, we may take for granted; he wouldn't have cut down the tree, for one thing,—for another he would have known that,

"it is excellent
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant."

He raised a formidable storm. The populace rose against him, mobbed, hooted, threatened his life, and deposed their tyrant. He was compelled to fly the town, the people solemnly vowing never to permit one of his name to reside in Stratford.

The carpenter who bought the tree of the sacrilegious clergyman was shrewd enough to turn his purchase to very profitable uses. He ingeniously cut the wood into various shapes, —caskets, snuff-boxes, tea-chests, standisher tobacco-stoppers, &c. A lively demand for these articles ensued. The tree contained a quite unprecedented quantity of timber—there really seemed to be no end of it. Perhaps all the relics were not quite genuine. The corporation of Stratford honoured the carpenter with their patronage. They despatched to Mr. Garrick, one of the managers of Drury Lane Theatre, the freedom of Stratford enclosed in a box made of the sacred wood, requesting that he would send a bust, statue, or picture of the poet to be placed in their Town hall; assuring the actor also that they should not be less pleased if he would forward his own portrait, "to be placed near that of his favourite author, in perpetual remembrance of both."

Garrick was greatly flattered, and accepted gratefully the homage of the corporation; most graceful compliments were interchanged; and soon it was resolved that a grand Jubilee in honour of Shakespeare should be held at

Stratford on the 6th, 7th, and 8th days of September, 1769. Great preparations were made, many months in advance. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* under date of the 14th February, 1769, we read: "About 100 trees were cut down near Stratford-upon-Avon in order to enlarge the prospect against the approaching Jubilee." Was any of the timber thus acquired used for relics, I wonder?

The Jubilee was to last three days. Boswell published a narrative of the proceedings in the *London Magazine*. Another account appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. "To give our readers as particular and authentic an account of the Jubilee at Stratford as possible," says the Editor, "we have procured, with some solicitation, extracts of a letter to a gentleman in London."

The style of this letter is very much that of a modern newspaper's special correspondent. The writer seems to have gone down to Stratford "to do the Festival" in a light, free-and-easy sort of way. He notes that much speculation is afforded to the inhabitants by the word Jubilee; and that they talk confusedly of Jew Bill, Jubilo, and Jubilum, "with æqual no meaning." He encounters a Banbury man carrying into the town a double bass-viol, on which he was unable to play, but doubted not he would be shown how when the proper time arrived. This musician spoke of the Jubilee as "the celebration of the *resur-*

rection of Shakespeare." The workmen were very busy constructing an amphitheatre, but the inhabitants were pursuing their occupation "in the old dog-trot way, or staring with wonderful vacancy of phiz at the preparation." The amphitheatre was on the plan of the Rotunda at Ranelagh, but not so large; a wooden building on the brink of the Avon, elegantly painted and gilded, with raised orchestra. On the banks of the river were transparencies: "Time leading Shakespeare to Immortality," Tragedy on the one side, Comedy on the other, after Sir Joshua Reynold's picture. In the church the poet's bust was so loaded with branches of bays as to look like "the god Pan in an old picture." The five windows of the Town-hall were filled with paintings of transparent silk—*Lear*, *Falstaff*, *Pistol*, *Caliban*, and the Genius of Shakespeare —"in a good stile." At one end hung Gainsborough's portrait of Garrick, at the other "a very good picture of Shakespeare in the attitude of inspiration." Shakespeare's house was covered with an emblematical transparency, the subject being the sun struggling through clouds to enlighten the world; "a figurative representation," says Mr. Davies, Garrick's biographer, "of the fate and fortunes of the much-beloved bard." On the evening of his arrival the correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine," "ate a Jubilee chicken at Peyton's," and retired to rest.

The Festival proper commenced with breakfast at the Town-hall at nine o'clock, the while a fife and drum band played favourite marches outside; the morning having been ushered in, according to Boswell, with "a pleasing serenade by the best musicians from London, in disguise." At eleven, an oratorio called *Judith*, the words by Bickerstaff and the music by Dr. Arne, was performed in the church, and met with universal applause. Boswell wishes that prayers had been read and a short sermon preached. The procession from the church was led by Garrick. An elegant dinner was served at four o'clock, "not in the most precise order," says our correspondent. He appears to have been satisfied upon the whole, however. "The ordinary, with wine (of which I drank claret and madeira, both good), 10*s.* 6*d.*" After dinner Lord Grosvenor, who seems to have been the chairman, proposed a bumper to the steward, Mr. Garrick ("whose behaviour exhibited the greatest politeness with the truest liveliness and hilarity)." The next toast was to the memory of the Bard, "to which was subjoined three cheers, at the instance of your humble servant, most heartily." (Our correspondent seems to have distinguished himself here.) Then the performers in the orchestra gave catches and glees, which proved to be so inspiring, that the whole audience joined in chorus; the whole closing with "God save the King,"

every voice being exerted. At seven o'clock the company withdrew to prepare for the ball, which opened at nine and closed about three; "remarkable chiefly for the most elegant minuet that I ever saw or shall see, by Mrs. Garrick and Mr. ——." Mrs. Garrick, it may be remembered, had been formerly celebrated as Mademoiselle Violetti, a dancer at the Italian opera-house in the Haymarket. No wonder she performed a minuet well. As to "Mr. ——," I can give no information. Could he have been Mr. Boswell?

The next morning a drizzling rain continued during many hours. It was found necessary to abandon the grand pageant upon which Garrick had expended much time and money. "It was to have been," writes Boswell, "a procession of allegorical beings, the most distinguished characters of Shakespeare's plays, with their proper dresses, triumphal cars, and other kinds of machinery; but the heavy rains made it impossible to have this exhibited without destroying the valuable dresses and endangering the still more valuable health of the fair performers, who might have been rendered incapable of appearing in public for a whole season—perhaps for life. But as no cost has been spared on this pageant, I hope Mr. Garrick will entertain us with it in the comfortable regions of Drury Lane." Mr. Garrick availed himself of this hint, as we shall see presently. It is possible that through-

out his preparations he had had an eye to future performances upon his own stage. At twelve o'clock the ode was performed in the amphitheatre. "Here," says an eyewitness, "Garrick did indeed outdo all his former outdoings." Lord Grosvenor came to the orchestra "and told Garrick that he had affected his whole frame, showing him his veins and nerves still quivering with agitation!" Boswell, during the execution of the ode, saw "the various passions and feelings which it contains fully transfused into all around. Garrick seemed in ecstacy, and gave us the idea of a mortal transformed into a demigod, as we read in the Pagan mythology . . . his eyes sparkled with joy, and the triumph of his countenance at some parts of the ode; its tenderness in others, and inimitable sly humours at others, cannot be described." Dr. Arne who had composed the music to the ode for the sum of sixty guineas, conducted the performance, and Mr. Richards, leader of the Drury Lane orchestra, was the first violin. Songs were added with words by Mr. Garrick, and music by Mr. Dibden, the singers consisting of Mr. Vernon, Mrs. Baddeley, Mrs. Barthelmon and Master Brown." Among the songs were "Sweet Willy O!" —"tender and pathetic;" "The Mulberry Tree"—"of which the chorus was very fine;" and "Warwickshire"—"a ballet of great merit in its kind, full of witty turns and even

delicate fancies." I subjoin two verses of this song, that the reader may judge for himself concerning it:—

As venison is very inviting,
To steal it our bard took delight in;
To make his friends merry he never was lag,
And the wag of all wags was a Warwickshire wag.
Warwickshire wag;
Ever brag,
For the wag of all wags was a Warwickshire wag.
There never was seen such a creature,
Of all she was worth he robbed Nature;
He took all her smiles and he took all her grief:
And thief of all thieves was a Warwickshire thief.
Warwickshire thief
He's the chief;
For the thief of all thieves was a Warwickshire thief.

This is here something of the doggrel of the tea gardens and music halls, I think, with all due deference to Mr. Boswell's notions about "witty turns" "and elegant fancies."

Altogether, there was considerable excitement in Stratford and its neighbourhood. The corporation gave a plate, and races were run outside the town. Boswell did not find these better or worse than other races; "nor indeed," he adds, "could they be expected to be anyhow extraordinary, except, as an ingenious lady observed, we could have procured a race of Pegasuses in honour of our poet." He was pleased with certain of the shop-bills, pronouncing them quite "pieces of genius." One Mr. Jackson, of Tavistock Street, London, we learn, gave about the following:—"SHAKESPEARE'S JUBILEE.—A ribband has been made on purpose at Coventry, called the Shake-

speare's Ribband; it is in imitation of the rainbow, which, uniting the colours of all parties, is likewise an emblem of the great variety of his genius. '*Each change of many-coloured life he drew.*'—JOHNSON." "I dare say," Boswell comments, "Mr. Samuel Johnson never imagined that this fine verse of his would appear on a bill to promote the sale of ribbands. . . . Since I have mentioned this illustrious author" (probably it would have been as difficult for Boswell to have avoided mention of his great friend as it was for Mr. Dick to keep all reference to Charles the First out of his memorial), "I cannot but regret that he did not honour the Jubilee with his presence, which would have added much dignity to our meeting."

But Johnson was with Mr. and Mrs. Thrale at Brighthelmstone, then a small fishing village, better known to us since as Brighton or London-super-mare. No doubt, as Boswell asserted, "Johnson's connection both with Shakespeare and Garrick founded a double claim to his presence: and it would have been highly gratifying to Mr. Garrick." But in such a matter Johnson did not especially care to gratify Garrick, and he shrunk from supporting a festival which, ostensibly in honour of Shakespeare, was likely in truth to be perverted to the glorification of the manager of Drury Lane Theatre. A certain jealousy between author and actor was of long standing.

Johnson could not divest himself of the old notion that the player was but a very near kinsman of the rogue and the vagabond. In his life of Savage, with a strange acrimony paying a compliment to Wilks the actor, he took occasion to speak of his condition, as making "almost every other man, for whatever reason, contemptuous, insolent, petulant, selfish, and brutal." He spoke of Garrick as "Punch;" asserted that he admired him "as a poor player who frets and struts his hour upon the stage"—"as a shadow;" affirmed that a ballad-singer was "a higher man, for he does two things, he repeats and he sings; there is both recitation and music in his performance; the player only recites." Boswell hinted at the money Garrick had made, as a proof of the value mankind had set upon his acting. "Is getting a hundred thousand pounds a proof of excellence?" Johnson demands. "That has been done by a scoundrel commissary." It is perhaps true, as Mr. Croker remarks, "that no portion of Johnson's character is so painful as his treatment of Garrick." But, as Boswell states, "Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself."

Nor did Dr. Goldsmith visit the Jubilee. There was, indeed, considerable opposition to the affair. Horace Walpole was bitterly severe concerning it, and was pleasantly reproached thereupon by Gray; for had he

not been tolerant of the exhibition in Paris of Madame Du Barry's portrait, joining the dense crowd that flocked to see it at the Louvre? Was there need for so much wrath to be wasted upon the poor player's harmless Jubilee? George Colman was there, manager of Covent Garden, as representing the theatre; his co-partner, Powell the actor, a man of genius, and a great public favourite, in many characters being only surpassed by Garrick, had died with some suddenness but two months previously at Bristol, his age only thirty-four. On the day of his death the actors were so affected that they could not continue their parts, and the audience, pardoning and sharing their emotion, dispensed with the farce which should have concluded the performance. Foote, too, was to be seen on the banks of the Avon, scoffing and jesting amidst a laughing crowd. A tall, unwieldly, corpulent man, presses through the throng, eager to converse with the famous wit. "Has the county of Warwick, sir, the honour of giving birth to you as well as to Shakespeare?" asks Foote. "No," answers the uncouth gentleman, "I come out of Essex." "Out of Essex?—out of Essex? *And pray who drove you?*" The crowd applauds, and the traveller retreats at the determined laughter resounding on all sides.

Garrick, it seems, had been prepared for some ridicule; he thought it advisable to

encounter this half-way, and divert opposition into purposes of entertainment. He arranged that Mr. King, one of his comedians, should enter the Amphitheatre in the course of the performance of the ode, and in the character of "a Maccaroni," state all possible objections to Shakespeare, charging him with vulgarity, barbarism, with exciting coarse and common emotions, such as laughing and crying, and with disturbing the *ennui*, which was the sole pleasure of gentlemen. The address concluded with a string of sarcasms against the Jubilee, Garrick, the corporation, and the whole company. Mr. King was a good actor, famous indeed as *Lord Ogleby*, and some years later as *Sir Peter Teazle;* his success as *Brass* (in the 'Confederacy' by Sir John Vanbrugh) is chronicled in Churchill's line about him in the 'Rosciad,'

"'Mongst Drury's sons he comes and shines in *Brass*."

It is probable that he delivered his address a little too well, or that there were some hard truths in it, and that Garrick's reply was a little ineffective and tame. Mr. King caused genuine amusement, though Boswell thinks it would have been better to have omitted his share in the festival—his address detracting from its dignity.

Another grand dinner was followed by a display of fireworks, the weather being still very unpropitious—"the Fireworks by Mr.

Angelo,"—and the Festival concluded with a masquerade. The correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine" only says of his own dress, that he wore a silver medal of Shakespeare, pendant from a sky-blue ribband round his neck, and a cockade of rainbow-coloured ribband in his hat. He mentions that some of the characters were well filled; specifying "an excellent Lord Ogleby, and a jockey, and as good a Dutch skipper, and a devil." "I got," he writes, "an ear of wheat from a sweet Ceres, and a honeysuckle from a beautiful Flora, and kissed each of their hands in testimony of my devotion." He retired "perfectly satisfied," as he need to have been, and "unfatigued," upon which he may be congratulated, between six and seven in the morning. It rained throughout the night steadily. As he judges, there were about eight hundred visitors at the breakfast, fifteen hundred at the dinners, and two thousand at the oratorio, ball and masquerade.

Boswell appears to have been less contented with the pleasures of the evening. He pronounced a masquerade unsuited to the genius of the British nation. "The reserve and taciturnity which is observable amongst us makes us appear awkward and embarrassed in feigned characters. Many of our Stratford masks seemed angry when one accosted them." But perhaps Boswell's dissatisfaction may be traced to the fact, that he had attempted to

recite a long pompous poem about the wrongs of Corsica, and that the dancers and masks had declined to listen to him, thinking, perhaps, that they had pleasanter occupation on hand. Boswell, however, printed his poetry in the London papers: whether he "shamed the fools" is another question. He was very mad about Corsica at this period: he had just published a journal of his tour in that island, reprinting in it paragraphs from Johnson's letters—much to the Doctor's annoyance. "I have omitted a long time to write to you, without knowing very well why. I could tell you why I should not write, for who would write to men who publish the letters of their friends without their leave? Yet I write to you, in spite of my caution, to tell you that I shall be glad to see you, *and that I wish you would empty your head of Corsica*, which I think has filled it rather too long." So Johnson wrote a year and a half before the Jubilee,—but still Boswell continued his rhodomontades about an oppressed nation struggling to be free. "Empty my head of Corsica!" he cries "empty it of honour, empty it of humanity, empty it of friendship, empty it of piety! No; while I live, Corsica and the cause of the brave islanders shall ever employ much of my attention, shall ever interest me in the sincerest manner." But at the time of the Festival the struggle was over—there was an end of the Corsican cause. General Paoli was

a fugitive in England, dangling at the Court of St. James in the hopes of a pension, while Boswell ostentatiously attended and toadied him—the world looking on and laughing. Boswell's book was only considered valuable in so much as it contained particulars concerning Paoli; no one pretending interest in Mr. Boswell's own adventures. Gray wrote to Walpole "The pamphlet proves, what I have always maintained, that any fool may write a most valuable book by chance, if he will only tell us what he heard and saw with veracity. Of Mr. Boswell's truth I have not the least suspicion, because I am sure he could invent nothing of this kind."

The "London Magazine" presents its readers with an elaborate engraving and description of Boswell's appearance at the masquerade, in the character of an armed Corsican Chief; "He wore a short, dark-coloured coat, of coarse cloth, scarlet waistcoat and breeches, and black spatterdashes; his cap or bonnet was of black velvet, on the front of it was embroidered, in gold letters, VIVA LA LIBERTA, and on one side of it was a handsome blue feather and cockade, so that it had an elegant as well as warlike appearance. On the breast of his coat was sewed a badge, a Moor's head, the crest of Corsica, surrounded with branches of laurel. He had also a cartridge pouch, into which was stuck a stiletto. He had a gun slung across his

shoulders; wore no powder in his hair, but had it plaited at its full length, with a knot of blue ribbands at the end of it. He had, by way of staff, a very curious vine, all of one piece, with a bird's head finely carved upon it, emblematical of the sweet Bard of Avon. He wore no mask, saying that it was not proper for a Corsican Chief. The novelty of the Corsican dress, its becoming appearance, and the character of that brave nation, concurred to distinguish the armed Corsican Chief." Further, we learn that Mr. Boswell, thus accoutred, entered the ball-room about twelve o'clock, and was first accosted by Mr. Garrick, with whom he had a good deal of conversation; that there was an admirable dialogue between Lord Grosvenor, in the character of a Turk, and the Corsican, on the different constitutions of their countries—so opposite to each other—despotism and liberty, and that Captain Thomson of the navy, in the character of an honest tar, kept it up very well, expressing a strong inclination to stand by the brave islanders. The reader who is inclined to think that the highest pitch of entertainment was hardly likely to be reached in this way, will be glad to learn that subsequently Mr. Boswell danced both a quadrille and a country dance with "a very pretty Irish lady—Mrs. Sheldon, wife to Captain Sheldon of the 38th Regiment of foot (Lord Blarney's). She was dressed in a genteel

domino, and before the dance threw off her mask." Quite right, too, Mrs. Sheldon: a pretty face was a better thing to contemplate by a great deal.

There was nothing more to be done by the visitors after the masquerade but to pay their bills and hurry away from Stratford with all possible speed. Complaints now arose on all sides, however. The wealthy and liberal part of the Stratford community were deeply sensible of the honour conferred upon their town and their poet by the Festival, and the crowd of visitors it brought in its train; but the lower and less enlightened classes of the people were found to exhibit an utter want of appreciation of the Jubilee. Not simply did they regard Mr. Garrick with a gross kind of awe, as though he were a wizard or a professor of legerdemain, crediting his wand with power to perform all sorts of magical wonders; not only did they attribute the incessant and violent rains which fell during the Jubilee to the judgment and vengeance of a Heaven offended, as they believed, with the fireworks, assemblies, music, dancing, and masks, and by way of punishment, literally throwing cold water upon the proceedings,—but they now set themselves to spoil the Egyptians, as it were, charging the most extravagant prices for lodging, provisions, and other necessaries of life. The modern tariffs at Doncaster during the St. Leger

week, or at Bognor during Goodwood, find precedent in the charges at Stratford during the Jubilee. Mr. Boswell, in treating of the subject, assumes a lofty philosophic monied tone: "Much noise was made about the high prices of everything at Stratford," he writes; "I own I cannot agree that such censures are just. It was reasonable that Shakespeare's townsmen should partake of the Jubilee as well as we strangers did: they, as a Jubilee of profit; we, of pleasure. As it lasted but a few nights, *a guinea* a night for a bed was not imposition; nobody was understood to come there who had not plenty of money." Much ill-humour arose, too, by reason of the difficulty in obtaining conveyances, for all were in a hurry to be off at once, and the company could only be taken away in detachments; those who had to wait until the carriages returned for their turn to depart, waxing exceedingly angry at the delay, and at having had to yield priority in the journey home to others. "I laughed away spleen by a droll simile," Boswell says in his self-contented way, "'taking the whole of this Jubilee,' said I, 'is like eating an artichoke entire, we have some fine mouthfuls, but also swallow the leaves and hair which are confoundedly difficult of digestion.' After all, however, I am highly satisfied with my artichoke." And then he proceeds to laud the Festival as "an antique idea," "a

Grecian thought." "My bosom glowed with joy when I beheld a numerous and brilliant company of nobility and gentry, the rich, the grave, the witty, and the fair, assembled to pay their tribute of praise to Shakespeare, and to Garrick the steward of the Festival." He avowed himself of opinion that Shakespeare's Jubilee at Stratford-upon-Avon did honour not only to the immortal bard, but to all who had contributed towards it, and he expressed a hope that every seven years it would be celebrated with equal ardour of enthusiasm as it had been in 1769. This, however, was not to be, Mr. Boswell. Stratford did not know another Jubilee; seven years brought failing health to Garrick. On the 10th June, 1776, he played for the last time: he appeared in the character of *Don Felix* in 'The Wonder,' the profits of the night being devoted to the Theatrical Fund, and took leave of his audience in a prose address which his emotion barely permitted him to utter. He retired amidst tears and acclamations. It was on the 1st February, 1779, that Taylor, the facetious pupil of Frank Hayman, entered the studio of Nollekens the sculptor, and said with a strange levity:—"For the information of some of the sons of Phidias, I beg to observe that David Garrick is now on his way to pay his respects to Poets' Corner. I left him just as he was quitting the boards of the Adelphi." Garrick

had died on the 20th of January at his house in the Adelphi. John Thomas Smith, then a lad of thirteen, afterwards the biographer of Nollekens, went out of the studio to see the procession pass by Charing Cross, following afterwards to the Abbey, where he heard the service read and saw the coffin lowered.

But to return to the Festival. Garrick, who, as his biographer, Davies, actor and bookseller, informs us, "always joined the strictest economy to the most liberal expenditure," determined that the money spent upon the pageant which the rain had prevented should not be altogether thrown away. He bethought him of bringing his procession upon the Drury Lane stage, and contrived, with that object, assisted by Mr. Benjamin Wilson, the portrait painter, a dramatic entertainment called the 'Jubilee,' a spectacle introducing mute representations of a principal scene from each of the plays of Shakespeare. The piece was never printed, though it obtained a large share of public favour, was performed nearly one hundred times, and was often revived subsequently. The Drury Lane manuscript was burnt with the theatre in 1809. Elliston is reputed to have borrowed the copy of the play belonging to the Bath theatre, and not to have returned it. But other copies must have survived, as the 'Jubilee' was performed at Covent Garden Theatre so late as 1816.

The dialogue was believed to have been written by Garrick; but certainly the literary merits of the work would seem to have been of the lowest possible description. A *pièce d'occasion*, however, does not put forth very high claims. Davies furnishes a particular account of the play in the notes to his 'Life of Garrick.' The first scene discloses the inside of a farm-house at Stratford-upon-Avon. *Goody Benson* discourses with her neighbour, *Mrs. Jervis*, concerning the approaching Jubilee, and their alarms thereat. They are confirmed in their fears by *Goodman Ralph*, who assures them that a Popish plot is in agitation, and that probably the whole town will be blown up with gunpowder. The report of cannon is soon after heard, and all three are thrown into agonies of terror. The scene then changes to an inn-yard; a post-chaise without horses is seen standing at a distance. A number of musicians in masks enter and perform a serenade. Disturbed by the music, an Irish gentleman (performed by Mr. Moody;—the play would have been incomplete if that stock humourist —the stage Irishman—had been omitted) puts his head out of the postchaise, and declares that it is "extremely hard they won't let people rest in their *beds*. I could not get a lodging in all the town, and so I took up with the first floor of this post-chaise; but the devil a wink of sleep could I get till

you waked me!" He comes out of the chaise with the observation that after all it's no such bad thing to be in bed ready dressed, and states that he was so hard put to it that he was obliged to make a nightcap of his wig. He inquires what the Jubilee *manes*, and is answered in the manner of Mr. Foote—that a Jubilee is to go post without horses, to hear an ode without poetry, music without melody, to have dinner without victuals, &c. Then ensues a great commotion amongst the travellers and the waiters of the inn. One guest eats another's breakfast: one traveller walks off in another's boots; a gentleman assures the ostler that his boots were quite new ones, and that he can see nothing of them; he is answered, "Alack-a-day, sir, all the new boots have been gone this half-hour —first come first served, you know." Much of the noisy buffoonery of a Christmas pantomime follows. Then a pedler offers for sale toys made of the mulberry-tree, quarrelling with another pedler as to the genuineness of their wares. The one had never possessed any of the real wood, it appears; the other had once had a small quantity, but has "sold more than would make a gallows to hang up his whole generation." The Irish gentleman in a rage beats and drives them both off, then consoles himself with hot punch and a nap. Meanwhile the procession passes, the bells ringing, the townspeople singing, and

the rustics discussing the merits of the poet, and labouring to comprehend the proceedings. The Irishman laments his having fallen to sleep, is very angry at the wet weather, and thinks the steward ought to be called to account for it. Finally, he declares Stratford to be the vilest place in the world, "for we can get nothing to eat," says he, "and are forced to pay double for that too!"

All this the audience found highly amusing, but no doubt the main source of pleasure was the pageant in the last scene, "as it was to have been presented at Stratford," placed upon the stage with an extraordinary magnificence. The characters of each play were sustained by chief members of the company—Garrick appearing as *Benedick*, King as *Touchstone*, Holland as *Richard the Third*, Miss Pope as *Beatrice*, Mrs. Barry as the *Tragic Muse*, and Mrs. Abington as the *Comic Muse*. As these moved in procession, they were preceded by heralds in appropriate costumes, bearing streamers of various colours, on which were inscribed the names of the plays, &c. Sixteen drummers headed the procession; then came banners with the mottoes *Veluti in speculum*, and *Totus mundus agit Histrionem*, a band of music following. After these entered the characters in 'As You Like It,' 'The Tempest,' 'The Merchant of Venice'—the caskets on a cabinet richly ornamented; *Shylock* with his knife and bond,

&c.—'Twelfth Night,' 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' *Bottom* with the ass's head; a number of children representing fairies; *Oberon*, the fairy king, and *Titania*, the queen, seated in an elegant carriage; 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' and 'Much Ado About Nothing.' Then appeared the *Comic Muse*, seated on a magnificent car drawn by satyrs, and attended by the different characters of ancient comedy. This terminated the first portion of the pageant. A military band next entered, followed by the characters in 'Richard the Third,' the king giving instruction to *Tyrrell* as to the murder of the two princes, who follow, led by the queen dowager; 'Cymbeline;' 'Hamlet,' the *Ghost* beckoning to *Hamlet*, who is held by his mother; *Ophelia* in the mad scene, the two *Gravediggers*, &c.; 'Othello,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'Henry the Eighth,' 'King Lear,' 'Macbeth,' 'Julius Cæsar,' and 'Antony and Cleopatra.' Upon these *Apollo* with his lyre followed, and the *Tragic Muse* on a triumphal car, surrounded by *Calliope*, *Clio*, *Erato*, *Euterpe*, *Polyhymnia*, *Terpsichore*, and *Urania*. An effigy of Shakespeare, copied from his monument in Westminster Abbey, with emblematical ornaments and a numerous train of attendants, closed the procession.

Of course this "illegitimate" entertainment, and the crowds it drew to the theatre, excited remark and ridicule. Foote especially

busied himself with squib and sarcasm at the expense of the manager of Drury Lane, losing no opportunity of arraigning Garrick's taste in the matter, and bringing upon him the laughter of the town. Garrick's ode was mercilessly criticised and parodied. His manner of recitation was even questioned. Ireland stated boldly that, though a consummate actor, no one could assert who had heard him speak the ode, that he was above mediocrity in speaking or reading. Foote threatened a burlesque jubilee with a mock procession in it, and a mock Garrick in the costume of the steward of the jubilee, with his wand, white-topped gloves, and the mulberry-tree medallion of Shakespeare hanging at his breast. "Some ragamuffin in the procession was to address him in two well-known lines of the grossest flattery; * to this Garrick's representative was to make no other answer but clap his arms like the wings of a cock, and crow out 'cock-a-doodle-doo.'" This piece of refined satire, however, was not put into execution. The mere threat was sufficient to occasion deep annoyance to Garrick. Perhaps nothing more was intended. He had so lively an apprehen-

* "A nation's task depends on you,
Perhaps a nation's virtue too."

William Whitehead.

This gentleman was a fashionable poet of that day. He succeeded Cibber as Laureate. "Cibber's familiar style," said Johnson, "was better than that which Whitehead has assumed. *Grand* nonsense is insupportable. Whitehead is but a little man to inscribe verses to players."

sion of ridicule that he grew seriously uneasy; his alarm at the impending caricature became apparent to all; and at last, the Marquis of Stafford, the friend of both actors, is said to have persuaded Foote to abandon his malicious design. They met as if by chance at the door of their patron's house, and, alighting from their chariots, stood for a moment exchanging significant looks. Garrick broke silence by asking, "Well, is it to be peace or war?" "Oh, peace, by all means," Foote replied, good-naturedly; and they passed the rest of the day together in great cordiality.

Garrick's ode was first performed at Drury Lane, on the 30th September, 1769, after the comedy of 'The Country Girl,' and apparently without creating much impression. It was called "An ode upon dedicating a building and erecting a statute to Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon;" the speaking part by Garrick, the songs and choruses by Vernon, Champnes, Mrs. Baddeley, Mrs. Scott, Miss Radley, &c. It was published, and immediately followed by a mock ode, parodying in its manner, Dryden's 'St. Cecilia's Day,' and regarded by the town as a very happy effort of wit and whim. The 'Jubilee' was first played on the 14th October. A rival pageant, but of a very inferior description, had been produced by Colman, at Covent Garden, on the 7th, in a play called 'Man and Wife, or

the Shakespeare Jubilee,' one scene of which represented the amphitheatre at Stratford, and the humours of a masquerade. Another effort had been made at the opposition theatre to forestall the glory of the Drury Lane procession by the production of 'Henry the Fifth,' with a gorgeous coronation scene, introducing the ceremony of the Champion of England "on a real horse." But these endeavours to anticipate Garrick's success were of little avail, and soon afterwards 'Man and Wife,' was played simply as a farce, the prelude and pageant being omitted. But increased splendour of stage decorations evidently became the rule of the theatre. A few years later Colman was producing 'The Fairy Prince,' a compilation from Ben Jonson's 'Masque of Oberon,'—"as a vehicle for representing the principal solemnities at the late installation of the Knights of the Garter."

After its first successful season, the "Jubilee" appears to have been laid aside for some years. In 1775 it was produced for one night only at Covent Garden, on the occasion of the benefit of Lee, an actor of some pretension, who played *The Drunken Man* and the *Steward of the Jubilee*. The ode was recited with the songs and choruses, and in the second act a statue of Shakespeare was brought on. After a lapse of ten years the play was again to be seen at Drury Lane, when Mrs. Siddons appeared as the *Comic Muse*, Mrs. Jordan as

Rosalind, Mr. Bannister as *Romeo*, Mr. Palmer as *Hamlet*, and Mr. Kemble as *Richard*.

At Bath, too, the 'Jubilee' was occasionally produced, Mr. Elliston appearing as *Iachimo*, and *Shylock*, in the procession.

On the 23rd April, 1816, there was some attempt at a celebration of the second centenary of years since the death of Shakespeare. At Drury Lane 'Romeo and Juliet' was performed, followed by a recital of 'Garrick's Ode,' by Mr. Pope, and a reproduction, for one night only, of the pageant from the 'Jubilee.' At Covent Garden Mr. Kemble played *Coriolanus*, and Garrick's 'Jubilee' followed, "the Pageant by the whole of the Company;" Mr. Kemble representing *Wolsey*, Mr. Charles Kemble *Macbeth*, Miss Stephens *Ophelia*, Miss O'Neill the *Tragic Muse*, Miss Foote *Cordelia*. *Hamlet* was personated by Mr. Betty, who volunteered. New songs and choruses were introduced, and the entertainment was repeated on the two following nights.

Mrs. Siddons did not appear, having retired from the stage in 1812; though in some subsequent years she favoured the public with special performances,—her *very last* appearance on the stage being in 1818.

A cup which had been presented to Garrick, carved from the mulberry tree, lined with and standing on a vase of silver, with a cover surmounted by a branch of mulberry

leaves and fruit of silver gilt, was sold by Mr. Christie the auctioneer, on the 5th May, 1825. After an offer of one hundred guineas, Mr. Christie said: "I was wishing that I had some of Falstaff's sack here, with which I might fill the cup and pledge the company so as to invigorate their biddings; but I think I may say now that at least there is no want of spirit among them."

Of Garrick and the Shakespeare Jubilee the poet Cowper wrote in the 'Task':—

"Man praises man; and Garrick's mem'ry next,
When Time hath somewhat mellowed it, and made
The idol of our worship while he lived
The God of our idolatry once more,
Shall have its altar; and the world shall go
In pilgrimage to bow before his shrine;
The theatre, too small, shall suffocate
Its squeezed contents, and more than it admits
Shall sigh at their exclusion, and return
Ungratified: for there some noble lord
Shall stuff his shoulders with King Richard's hunch
Or wrap himself in Hamlet's inky cloak
And strut and storm and straddle, stamp and stare
To show the world how Garrick did not act.
For Garrick was a worshipper himself:
He drew the liturgy and framed the rites,
And solemn ceremonial of the day,
And called the world to worship on the banks
Of Avon, famed in song. Ah, pleasant proof
That piety was still in human hearts,
Some place, a spark or two not yet extinct.
The mulberry-tree was hung with blooming wreaths,
The mulberry-tree stood centre of the dance,
The mulberry-tree was hymned with dulcet airs,
And from his touchwood trunk, the mulberry-tree
Supplied such relics as devotion holds
Still sacred and preserves with pious care.
So 'twas a hallowed time; decorum reigned
And mirth without offence. No few returned,
Doubtless much edified, and all refreshed."

CHAPTER VIII.

PLAYER KINGS AND QUEENS.

THE players who personate kings are not always kings among the players. It often devolves, indeed, upon the actors of quite subordinate rank to represent the potentates of the drama. Such characters, for instance, as King Cymbeline and King Duncan can rarely have been undertaken by performers of any great distinction. Upon the stage Prince Hamlet is, of course, a far more important personage than King Claudius. One Sparks, a tragedian of the last century, long enjoyed the reputation of being the only actor "who did not make an insipid figure" in the part of Hamlet's uncle. A critic wrote of Mr. Sparks that he was "great in the soliloquy, respectable in every passion of the least importance, and, when stabbed, peculiarly happy in falling from the throne." This is something to be said of a player. Few representatives of Claudius, however, can have been so successful as Mr. Sparks in obtaining critical recognition of their exer-

tions in the character. The king in Hamlet is generally held to be "a wretched part for an actor."

It was customary for the players to assign the characters of the kings of the theatre to one particular member of their company, endowed, probably, with physical advantages of an imposing kind, a certain natural majesty of aspect and of action. To old-fashioned tragedy, kings were as necessary as to packs of cards. The dramatic king might be an actual figure borrowed from history, or a mere creation of the poet, such as the king in 'The Maid's Tragedy,' of Beaumont and Fletcher, or in the 'Love's Labour's Lost,' of Shakespeare. "He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me," says Hamlet upon the announcement of the arrival at Elsinore of the tragedians of the city. Some critics have been disposed to hold that the prince's speech had sardonic reference to the king then occupying the throne of Denmark. It is to be observed, however, that Hamlet proceeds to enumerate, as though greeting them with equal cordiality, the other members of the dramatic company: the adventurous knight, the lover, the humorous man, the clown, and the lady. And upon the entrance, in accordance with the stage direction, of "four or five players," "You are welcome, masters; welcome all," he cries, while particularly recognising one

of the troop as his "old friend," and pleasantly noting the growth of his beard since last they had met. Was this the actor who was subsequently to personate the king in the tragedy of 'The Mousetrap'—the image of a murder done in Vienna—the story extant and written in very choice Italian, Gonzago being the duke's name, and his wife's Baptista? It may be remarked that 'The Mousetrap' was not an original work; that even in the time of King Claudius, adaptations were already in vogue at the performances before the court.

No doubt players and playwrights brought kings and queens upon the stage because the public enjoyed the proceeding, and demanded entertainment of the sort. Majesty has its theatrical side. Sovereigns are a portion of the pageantry of history; their careers, characters, deeds, and mis-deeds becoming lawful subject for dramatic exhibition and manipulation. Of the long list of monarchs who have, from time to time, sat upon the English throne, nearly all have found counterfeit presentment in the theatre. The illustrious, indeed, have always to pay the penalties attaching to their condition, to endure the fierce glare of publicity, and the expedients fame adopts to perpetuate their memories; to submit themselves to the arts, in turn, of the portrait-painter, the statuary, the modeller in wax, and the theatrical performer.

Of the early monarchs who have appeared upon the scene, we owe to Shakspeare not only Cymbeline and Duncan, but also Lear, the greatest of stage kings. Dryden produced a "dramatic opera," entitled, 'King Arthur, the British Worthy,' Purcell, supplying the music. The work has departed from the theatre long since, yet the grand scena, 'Come, if you dare,' still lingers in concert-rooms, a favourite song with heroic tenors. Bonduca is a fine tragedy by Beaumont and Fletcher, the same royal heroine, under the name of Boadicea, appearing also in plays by Leonidas Glover and Charles Hopkins. 'Athelwold' is a tragedy by Aaron Hill. Mason's 'Elfrida' was presented upon the scene in an operatic form, with music by Giardini. Edgar the English Monarch, and 'King Edgar and Alfreda,' are plays written in the seventeenth century by Rymer and Ravenscroft respectively. 'Edwy and Elgiva' is the title of an unsuccessful play by Madame D'Arblay. Sheridan Knowles dealt dramatically with the history of Alfred the Great, Mr. Macready personating that illustrious English monarch on the stage of Drury Lane, but the work did not enjoy many representations. And in Mrs. Barbauld's 'Evenings at Home,' it need hardly be said, there will be found a little drama suited to performance by juvenile actors to overflowing nurseries, setting forth Alfred's misadven-

tures in the neat-herd's hut, and his complete failure as a baker. Sir Henry Taylor's poetic drama of 'Edwin the Fair' has escaped the footlights. Mr. Heraud has written sundry plays dealing with early British history, introducing royal personages of exceeding antiquity.

The Laureate's 'Harold' has not yet obtained representation, nor has William the Conqueror appeared very distinctly upon the mimic scene. Cumberland produced a play called 'The Battle of Hastings,' and there is a drama by Boyce having 'Harold' for its title; but in neither of these works does the Great Norman find occupation. He is constantly mentioned by the other personages, but he is not permitted corporeal introduction to the audience. William Rufus wears theatre shape only in a forgotten tragedy, by Mr. Fitzball, produced long since at Covent Garden Theatre, and bearing the title of 'Walter Tyrrell.' Of Henry the First and King Stephen the stage would seem to know nothing beyond what is related of the latter in Iago's drinking song that proclaims him "a worthy peer," and specifies the exact cost of a certain important portion of his dress. For dramatic portrayal of 'Henry the Second,' we must turn to Addison's opera of 'Rosamond' and to a play by Hawkins, called 'Henry and Rosamond,' published in 1749; but, as the title-page announces, "not acted, from the mana-

gers fearing that many passages would be applied to the unfortunate differences between George the Second and Frederick Prince of Wales." However, the play came upon the stage some five-and-twenty years later, when it was found that the significance of the work had been over-valued. Henry and Rosamond did not impress the public much or enjoy many representations. The pathetic legend of Fair Rosamond is scarcely known to the modern theatre, except in the form of burlesque or pantomime. In a travesty of the story by Mr. Burnand the performance of the character of Queen Eleanor by the late Mr. Robson at the Olympic Theatre provoked extraordinary applause. King John lives for ever in Shakspeare; but for the king's great brother and predecessor, strangely enough, the stage has done little: Cœur de Lion has inspired no poetic dramatist of repute. The royal crusader has been seen in the theatre only in adaptations of 'Ivanhoe' and the 'Talisman' of Scott; in a musical Cœur de Lion by Burgoyne, at Drury Lane in 1786, when John Kemble played the king, and attempted a song with only partial success; in another musical 'Cœur de Lion,' by Mac Nally, produced at Covent Garden the same year; and in the later opera of 'Maid Marian,' by Planché and Bishop—Richard being then personated by Mr. T. P. Cooke, an actor but rarely entrusted with

royal characters. Henry the Third knew for a while theatrical existence in a poetic five act play, called 'Thomas à Becket,' written by Douglas Jerrold, and produced upon the Surrey stage in 1830. Concerning Edward the First there is extant an early play by George Peele, bearing date 1593. Edward the Second owes dramatic existence to Marlowe's mighty lines. Of Edward the Third a glimpse is obtained in Ben Jonson's incomplete tragedy, 'Mortimer's Fall.' A play called 'Edward the Third,' with the 'Fall of Mortimer, Earl of March,' attributed to Bancroft, appeared in 1690. We are now among the kings of Shakspeare; their names need not be enumerated.

To Edward the Fourth Heywood had devoted a play in two parts. The Richard the Third of the theatre has been too often Colley Cibber's rather than Shakspeare's. But what a mark the monarch has made in histrionic annals! What great actors have delighted to assume the part, and what innumerable little ones! The closing scenes of the tragedy bring the Earl of Richmond for a while in front of the footlights. For a full-length theatrical portrait of King Henry the Seventh, we have to turn to Macklin's sorry play concerning the story of Perkin Warbeck, and entitled oddly enough, the historical period being considered, 'The Popish Impostor.' But the work was hurriedly

written and produced in 1746, with a hope that the public might apply the subject to the case of the young Pretender. The dulness of the treatment, however, outweighed the appositeness of the theme, and after a few performances of 'The Popish Impostor,' the theatre knew it no more. In addition to Shakspeare's portraiture of King Henry the Eighth, other presentments of the monarch have occurred in Mr. Tom Taylor's poetic tragedy of 'Anna Boleyn,' in Mr. Raleigh's play of 'Queen and Cardinal,' and in various melodramas, especially relative to the Windsor forest fables of Herne the Hunter. Pantomime and burlesque have also laid hands very freely indeed upon the person of 'Bluff King Hal;' and Italian opera has even pressed him into its service. Signori Lablache and Tamburini were wont to find opportunities for the display of their art when personating the portly Enrico of Donizetti's Anna Bolena. Henry's son, Edward the Sixth, appears not to have been of the slightest histrionic service.

The eldest daughter of King Henry the Eighth lived upon the stage in Tennyson's tragedy of 'Queen Mary.' Until the advent of that work her Majesty had hardly been seen in the theatre except, perhaps, in Mr. Tom Taylor's melodrama, ''Twixt Axe and Crown,' founded in great part upon a German original by Madame Birch-Pfeiffer, which in

its turn may have owed something to Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's popular novel, 'The Tower of London.' The queen was also the heroine of Victor Hugo's great tragic play, 'Marie Tudor,' and occasionally that play in a translated or adapted form has been seen upon the English stage. Years since it furnished Balfe with a libretto, and the Surrey Theatre with a melodrama. But the venue of the subject, so to speak, has always been changed; it was recognised that Victor Hugo's views of English history could not be made acceptable to an English audience; the play was made available here by altering its background, the plot was appropriated but assigned a more remote situation; Queen Mary was made to assume the guise of a foreign sovereign—a Swedish Queen or a Russian czarina. Queen Elizabeth, although for humorous reasons she was excluded from Mr. Puff's tragedy, 'The Spanish Armada,' has trod the stage upon many occasions. Shakspeare exhibited her christening procession. She was seen as the Lady Elizabeth both in Tennyson's 'Queen Mary,' and in Mr. Tom Taylor's ''Twixt Axe and Crown.' She appeared in a variety of seventeenth century tragedies: 'The Albion Queens, or, the Death of Mary Queen of Scots,' and 'The Unhappy Favourite, or, the Earl of Essex,' both works being by John Banks, and three plays dealing with the career of the Earl of Essex, by

James Ralph, Henry Jones, and Henry Brooke respectively, all borrowed in part from the earlier production by John Banks. Schiller's Mary Stuart brings Elizabeth upon the scene, but only as a secondary character. For Madame Ristori, however, who had shone as Mary Stuart in an Italian version of Schiller's play, Signor Giacometti provided a tragedy 'Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra,' of which our virgin queen was quite the leading personage; and translations of the work have been seen upon the English stage. Elizabeth, of course, finds a part in all dramatic versions of Scott's 'Kenilworth,' both serious and burlesque, and, no doubt, has figured in various minor plays and burlettas of which fame has kept no account. For the queen is, theatrically speaking, a strong and striking part which affords its representatives excellent histrionic opportunities. The great Mrs. Barry was a famous Elizabeth, and assuming that character, was wont to wear right royally the coronation robes of James the Second's queen; for, in times past, the kings and queens by divine right often bestowed their cast clothes and discarded finery upon their illegitimate kindred of the theatre. Mrs. Porter was always a distinguished Elizabeth in Banks's 'Unhappy Favourite;' the play seems to have quitted the stage with that admired actress of the eighteenth century.

The sovereigns after Elizabeth have been less signally represented in the theatre. With the coming of the Stuarts, the drama began to decline in literary rank, and stage portraits to be limned by less able hands. History ceased to occupy the scene in the old grand way; poetry ebbed away from the playhouses, and plays sank to a prosaic level. The blank verse now is often found to halt, and a bar-sinister blemishes the drama's coat of arms, betraying its illegitimacy. The James the First of the players is mainly derived from Scott's 'Fortunes of Nigel,' rudely moulded into a dramatic form, although a more poetic play by the Rev. James White, dealing with the monarch as James the Sixth of Scotland, enjoyed favour for a while during Mr. Phelps's tenancy and management of Sadler's Wells. John Kemble now and then appeared as Charles the First in a dreary tragedy by Havard the actor, looking the part admirably as his portraits manifest. Miss Mitford also produced a play having the hapless king for its hero. In later times Mr. Irving has portrayed Charles with special success in a tragedy by Mr. Wills. Cromwell hardly comes of right into this list, for his was not a crowned head. It may be noted, however, that he has often been seen upon the stage: as the king's rival in Mr. Wills's Charles the First, and also in a drama called Buckingham by the same writer; in a poetic

tragedy by the late Colonel A. B. Richards; in theatrical versions of 'Woodstock,' and probably in divers forgotten melodramas. M. Victor Hugo's colossal play of Cromwell may also be mentioned, and Alexandre Dumas's portraiture of both Charles and Cromwell in his 'Vingt Ans Après,' and the play founded upon that historical romance.

Charles the Second has paced the stage in many works of slight constitution and small pretence, but no poetic dramatist has laboured on his account. He was a king much more suited to the purposes of comedy, or even of farce, than of tragedy. He could hardly look for grave or reverent treatment at the hands of the players, or, indeed, of any other class. Charles Kemble, however, endowed the Merry Monarch with grace, dignity, and good looks he could scarcely claim as strictly his due in the farce called 'Charles the Second,' which Howard Payne borrowed from the little French drama 'La Jeunesse de Henri V.' The same theme also furnished Drury Lane with a ballet, 'Betty, or the Wags of Wapping,' in which Mdlle. Sophie Fuoco was wont to dance, and Mr. George Macfarren with the libretto of his most successful opera. Charles has appeared in the plays which Douglas Jerrold, and, at a later date, Mr. Wills have founded upon the adventures of Nell Gwynne, and Mr. Charles Reade once pressed the monarch into a forcible drama, 'The King's

Rival,' concerning the loves of Miss Stewart (the original Britannia of our coinage) and the Duke of Richmond, and bringing Mr. Pepys upon the stage to provide Mr. Toole with one of his earliest parts in a London theatre. And, of course, King Charles has been seen in stage versions of 'Woodstock' and 'Peveril of the Peak,' and in melodramatic traffickings with such subjects as old St. Paul's, the plague and the fire, Whitehall and Whitefriars. Nor should the king's presence be forgotten in Mr. Planché's dainty little comedy of 'Court Beauties,' with its living copies of the Hampton Court pictures by Lely and Kneller. Altogether, Charles the Second has been shone upon by the stage lamps as often, perhaps, as any other sovereign, although he has never been allotted such important histrionic duties and responsibilities as Poetry and Tragedy toil to provide.

The sovereigns after Charles have rarely shown themselves or been shown upon the scene. It would be difficult to bring home to the players any acquaintance with James the Second or with his son the Old Pretender. The romantic adventures of Prince Charles Edward, however, have been sometimes converted to dramatic use, if the stage has nothing known of that last of the Stuarts, the Cardinal of York, whom the inveterate Jacobites were pleased to entitle Henry the

Ninth of England. Versions of 'Waverley' at one time possessed the theatre, and Jacobite plots have been of service to many playwrights. In these works the young Chevalier has now and then shown himself, although he may never have required to be personated by actors of the first class. With William and Mary the stage can boast little intimacy, though occasional dealings with the Massacre of Glencoe may have brought the king more or less near to the playhouse, while in Mr. Tom Taylor's melodrama of 'Clancarty' and in Sheridan Knowles's plays of 'The Secretary,' William is assuredly visible upon the scene. In his famous 'Verre d'Eau,' of which sundry versions have appeared in England, M. Scribe dealt very freely with our good Queen Anne. Yet when the play was adapted to our stage the dramatist's portrayal of her majesty was found not recognisable; it was deemed expedient to destroy the nationality of the sovereign; she was presented as the ruler of a foreign realm—German, or Spanish, or Portuguese. In the opera of 'Marta,' a queen appears who is understood to be Queen Anne, but who is allowed to say and do little enough upon the stage. The 'Heart of Midlothian' as dramatised exhibited, for a scene or two, a stage presentment of Queen Caroline, the wife of George the Second. The theatre—that is, the English theatre—knows no royalty of later date, if we may pass over Elliston's

personation of George the Fourth when the coronation procession of that sovereign was brought upon the stage of Drury Lane as a spectacle. Parisian audiences have seen our Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth, conducting himself very strangely indeed in dramas purporting to relate the stories of Edmund Kean, of Sheridan, or of Caroline of Brunswick. In an English version of the 'Kean' of Alexandre Dumas, it was found necessary to convert the 'Prince de Galles' of the original into a German princeling or grand duke.

The House of Hanover has not been brought upon our stage. It has been deemed expedient to consider the susceptibilities of the reigning family, or it may have been held that the Royal Georges do not present themselves as likely subjects for dramatic or histrionic treatment. Perhaps the more a ruler is constitutional, the less he is available for theatrical purposes. The stage loves a tyrant monarch whose will is law, whose proceedings are absolute and arbitrary. Under a parliamentary government, the player-king has but a poor part. The sovereign who can do no wrong, who can only act through his ministers, who can take little personal share or responsibility in the transactions of his reign, whose only speech is a speech from the throne, written for him by his premier, would figure but inefficiently in the theatre. Actors of

position would probably refuse the part as "out of their line" or fit only for the subordinate member of the company. Moreover, the prejudices and prescriptions of the Lord Chamberlain have to be considered and conciliated, and that officer of state is known to be curiously sensitive concerning plays which approach modern events of political import or introduce august or eminent personages. It is, indeed, forbidden to represent living characters upon the stage, although the intention may be never so complimentary. The list of theatrical crowned heads is not likely, therefore, to be immediately increased by portrayals of our modern monarchs, although new personations of past kings and queens may from time to time, be given to the stage.

CHAPTER IX.

MELODRAMA.

THE production of a play called 'A Tale of Mystery,' at Covent Garden Theatre, in 1802, was the occasion of very considerable excitement. The new work, avowedly borrowed from the French stage by Mr. Holcroft, the author of 'The Road to Ruin,' was described in the playbills as "a melodrama." To the British playgoer of the period the term was very strange; doubt prevailed, indeed, as to its precise signification. Young Mr. Harris, the son of the Covent Garden manager, had assuredly forgotten his Greek when he wrote from Paris to his friend Frederick Reynolds, the dramatist: "At the Porte St. Martin an entirely novel species of entertainment is performed called melodrama, mixing as the name implies (mêler drame), the drama and ballet of action, which latter it will probably supersede." He continues: "Holcroft, I understand, has translated one of these pieces for Covent Garden, and it will shortly be produced under the title of 'A Tale of Mystery.'"

The new production was received with

great applause, and was played on thirty-seven nights during its first season—a "long run" for those times. Genest makes mention of it as the first and best of "those melodramas with which the stage was afterwards inundated." He hastens to denounce, however, as "an unjustifiable species of the drama," this "mixture of dialogue and dumb-show accompanied by music." It seems that at this time a measure of pantomime was indispensable to melodrama. In 'A Tale of Mystery,' Farley, a skilled pantomimist, appeared with distinction as Francisco, a dumb man, whose life, for various reasons, is placed in constant peril from the assaults of hired assassins. The scene is laid in Savoy, and the fable is highly seasoned with romance and mystery of what may be called the Mrs. Radcliffe pattern. The music was supplied by Dr. Busby, a composer, whose literary pretensions incurred the bitter ridicule of Lord Byron.

Melodrama was, in truth, a consequence of the severity of the French stage. The prohibitions under which the drama laboured induced a sort of unnatural growth in a special direction. Schlegel, writing early in the century, notes that dramatic poetry in Paris possessed "a certain point of contact with the police," and that the restrictions placed upon the leading theatres banished to the minor stages all new and mixed attempts at histrionic entertainment. Of these, melodrama, of course,

constituted the chief part. For some years the melodramas produced in Paris had far exceeded in number all the other plays put together. Schlegel is careful to add that French melodrama is not to be understood simply as a play interspersed with music, but as an exhibition of wonderful and adventurous actions, a marvellous story related in emphatic prose, with suitable scenes, decorations and dresses. Geoffroy, the famous French critic, has defined melodrama to be "opera in prose, which is merely spoken, and to which music discharges the duty of a valet de chambre, because her office is simply to announce the actors." This definition omits all mention of the kind of fable peculiar to melodrama; and no doubt in the first instance melodrama was to be distinguished rather by its manner than its matter. A 'Tale of Mystery' had been preceded by such plays as 'The Castle Spectre;' 'Deaf and Dumb;' 'Obi, or, Three-fingered Jack;' and 'The Children in the Wood,' to name no more, which might now be safely classed as melodramas. They were not so described or accepted, however, upon their first production. Colman's 'Iron Chest' and 'The Mountaineers' were known as musical plays; no one had yet accounted them melodramas. 'Inkle and Yarico,' by the same writer, was called an opera; a little more or less of music effected this difference in classification.

In France the popularity of melodrama brought about the triumph of the romantic over the classical drama. Schlegel had suggested that "advantage might be taken of this prevailing inclination to furnish a better description of entertainment; since most of the melodramas are unfortunately rude even to insipidity, and resemble abortive attempts at the romantic." There was soon change in this respect. Already Le Mercier was endeavouring to break down the old barriers, and to trample "the unities" under his feet. Schlegel inferred that "the old and narrow system was chiefly upheld by a superstitious attachment to traditional opinions." The conflict was long and severe, however. Le Mercier's 'Christopher Columbus' was the occasion of a tumult in the theatre; "several of the champions of Boileau came off with bruised heads and broken shins;" but the play was driven from the stage. The dramatist had violated the law prescribing "unity of place." The scene of action changes from the house of Columbus to the Court of Isabella, and thence to the deck of the discoverer's ship sailing toward the New World. The complete triumph of the romantic drama was deferred until the production of Victor Hugo's 'Hernani,' in 1830. The struggle had been violent, and for a time the victory remained doubtful. The theatre was a scene of riotous confusion; the pit was a battle-field; pugilistic encounters

filled up the intervals between the acts. The adherents of the old laws and the advocates of the new theories being brought face to face, rivalled each other in energy and enthusiasm. The opponents were distinguishable by their aspect and costume. The classicists proclaimed by their severity of dress the uncompromising rigour of their opinions; they assumed starched cravats, their faces were closely shaven, their locks were curled and crested in the Brutus manner, their closely-fitting black coats were buttoned to the throat; whereas the romanticists announced their love of liberty and picturesqueness by means of their velvet jackets, their loose pantaloons, their beards of mediæval pattern, and their long rolling hair that rested on their shoulders.

When the curtain fell upon 'Hernani' it was clear that the romanticists had triumphed. Youth and liberty were on their side.

Among the foremost advocates of the romantic school contending for liberty of composition, as opposed to "the bondage of the unities," or the prescriptions of antiquity, appeared Alfred de Vigny, Sainte-Beuve, Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, and Jules Janin. In the preface to his Cromwell, published in 1827, Victor Hugo first attacked the doctrines of the classicists, "brushing them aside like spiders' webs," said Janin. He denounced in passionate terms "the wretched quibbles which mediocrity, envy, and routine

opposed to genius—with the scissors of the 'unities' clipping the wings of our grandest poets and hindering their flights aloft." In various publications Hugo continued his efforts in favour of what he termed freedom and tolerance in dramatic literature.

In England melodrama met with little opposition. From a foreign point of view, indeed, our drama had always been of a melodramatic quality. Schlegel says: "We may safely admit that the most of the works of the English and Spanish theatres are neither tragedies nor comedies in the sense of the ancients—they are romantic dramas." To Shakspeare's disregard of classic prescription is due the contemptuous estimation of his works by foreign critics. Voltaire scoffed at the poet as "a drunken savage," and even among the Germans, until Lessing wrote upon the subject, an opinion prevailed that Shakspeare's plays were "monstrous productions which could only have been given to the world by a disordered imagination in a barbarous age." Schlegel pleads, on behalf of his countrymen, that they but followed the example of the Shakspearian editors and commentators of the eighteenth century, who not only admitted the irregularity of the poet's works, but on occasion accused him "of a confused ungrammatical and conceited mode of writing, and even of the most contemptible buffoonery;" and notes

further that in Hume's History, a work highly valued by foreigners, there is much to encourage a depreciatory opinion of Shakspeare. The historian, weighing the merits of Ben Jonson and Shakspeare, decided that the one lacked genius and the other learning, and that "both were equally deficient in taste and elegance, in harmony and correctness." He proceeds: "A servile copyist of the ancients, Jonson translated into bad English the beautiful passages of the Greek and Roman authors without accommodating them to the manners of his age and country. This merit has been totally eclipsed by that of Shakspeare, whose rude genius prevailed over the rude art of his contemporary. The English theatre has ever since taken a strong tincture of Shakspeare's spirit and character, and thence it has proceeded that the nation has undergone from all its neighbours the reproach of barbarism, from which its valuable productions in some other parts of learning would otherwise have exempted it."

There had been much earlier objection, however, to the irregularities of the English drama. Sir Philip Sidney, in his Apology of Poetry, written about 1583, presents himself as a strenuous advocate for the observance of the rules of the ancients, and is particular in pointing out the total neglect of dramatic propriety prevalent in his time. After enumerating the sins of the dramatists against

the unities, he proceeds to show, "besides these gross absurdities, how all their plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in magisterial matters, with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor right sportfulness is by their mongrel tragicomedy obtained." Complaints of like effect were also urged by Gosson, author of 'The School of Abuse,' and by Whetstone, author of the play of 'Promos and Cassandra,' on which Shakspeare founded his 'Measure for Measure.' And there were, as Mr. Payne Collier has noted, three English poets who shortly before the close of Elizabeth's reign, by the example of their writings, opposed the progress of the romantic drama and adhered to the forms of the classic theatre. These were Samuel Daniel, the Countess of Pembroke, and Samuel Brandon. 'Cleopatra,' a tragedy by Daniel, appeared upon the stage; but the play of 'Philotas,' by the same author, Lady Pembroke's tragedy of 'Antony,' and Brandon's 'Virtuous Octavia,' did not obtain the honours of representation. Daniel was appointed to superintend the performances of 'The Children of the Queen's Revels,' on the accession of James the First. In the preface to his Philotas he warmly denounced the romantic drama of his time: he speaks of

the "idle fictions" and "gross follies" with which "men's recreations were abused" at the theatres. These classic plays hindered in no way the progress of the romantic drama; they do not figure conspicuously in the literature of the stage, their poetic merits are but small, and they are only now curious as a sort of impotent protest.

The Restoration brought to England foreign taste in regard to dramatic literature, to morals, and other matters. Rhyming tragedies in the French manner appeared upon the stage, and some attempt was made to adhere to the prescriptions of the classic drama, to revive respect for the unities. Congreve's 'Mourning Bride' was especially praised by Voltaire for its conformity to antique conventions, in distinction to the other barbarous productions of the English stage. Otway in his 'Venice Preserved' and 'Orphan,' had already exhibited some attention to the old formula. And Addison's 'Cato,' a direct following of classic example, was presently to appear. Upon the last revival of 'Cato' at Covent Garden in 1811, however, the intentions of the author were set at defiance, and the spectators were regaled with a change of scenes, "in order," it was stated, "to obviate the absurdities in which Addison had involved himself by making the whole play pass in Cato's great hall." Subsequent plays, written in maintenance of the

classic rules, were the 'Mariamne' of Fenton, the 'Fatal Curiosity' of Lillo, the 'Tancred and Sigismunda' of Thompson, the 'Irene' of Johnson, the 'Elfrida' of Mason, the 'Boadicea' of Glover, the 'Barbarossa' of Brown. Perhaps the last English advocate for "the unities," was Lord Byron in writing his 'Sardanapalus,' and 'The Two Foscari.' He maintained that, with any distant departure from the classical pattern which had so long been a law of literature throughout the world, there might be poetry, but there could be no drama—a sentence which dismisses from the theatre the whole troop of Elizabethan dramatists! As Goethe observed jocosely of Byron, "he was a man who, never having subjected himself to anything, had at last submitted to the silliest of all laws —those of the three unities." Dr. Johnson who, in his frigid 'Irene,' had been scrupulously faithful to Aristotelian rules, thus delivers himself on the subject in his preface to Shakspeare: "The unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama. Though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction. A play written with nice observation of the critical rules is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown rather what is possible than what is necessary." Shakspeare, as he

appears cramped into the procrustean bed of the unities, may be studied in the extraordinary versions of 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'King Lear,' 'Othello,' and 'Romeo and Juliet,' arranged by Ducis for performance at the Théâtre Français.

But if in England we have at no time possessed anything corresponding to the classical drama of France, we have yet owned a so-called "legitimate drama," which has been a fruitful subject of discussion and conflict. The term "legitimate drama" was often employed by Mr. Macready, and he has been deemed its inventor. Lord Byron had availed himself of it, however, in his preface to 'Marino Faliero,' and it had probably been of service to earlier writers. Strictly interpreted, it may be taken to signify the class of plays which could only be presented, so far as London was concerned, on the stages of the patent theatres, or which could not be performed at the minor houses without breach of the law. But by the expression "legitimate drama," works of poetic quality or superior literary worth have been usually signified. "How do you describe the legitimate drama?" Mr. Duncombe enquired of Douglas Jerrold, during his examination before the Parliamentary Commission of 1832 on Dramatic Literature and the state of the drama. Jerrold replied: "I describe the legitimate drama to be when the interest of the piece is rather mental than

physical. A melodrama is a piece with what are called a great many telling situations. . . . I would not call a piece like 'The Hunchback' a melodrama, because the interest of the piece is of a mental order." It is clear, however, that our legitimate drama would have gladly opened its ranks to works such as the 'Cromwell,' 'Marion,' 'Delorme,' and 'Hernani' of Victor Hugo, for instance, against which the classicists of France so loudly protested. And thus we recognise what the French classicists do not, apparently—a distinction between the romantic drama and mere melodrama; or we may be supposed to view the romantic drama as now soaring to the skies with Shakspeare and his brother-bards, and now sinking to the level of the mountebanks and funambulists at a fair. The late Mr. Fitzball, the contriver of innumerable melodramas, and perhaps a prejudiced witness, in his Thirty-five Years of a Dramatic Author's Life, has even boldly stated his opinion that, "everything dramatic that is moral, interesting, and amusing to the public, is the legitimate drama, whether it be illuminated with blue fire, or in one act or twenty." And he proceeds to cite the authority of Sheridan Knowles: "What did Knowles say to me once on this very subject? I was rehearsing my serio-ballet (*sic*) of Hans of Iceland, when I saw Knowles standing at the P.S., lost in contemplating the scene, and riveted as it were to the interest of the action

going on; for understand there was not a word spoken. I met Knowles the next morning in Cranbourne Alley, when I enquired what he had found to interest him so in our rehearsal. 'Everything,' was his reply; 'the very spirit of the drama—action that speaks to the heart as forcibly, if not more so, than the finest speech." Then he was pleased to pay me a very great compliment, which, coming from so great a man, I may be justified in speaking of, especially since it leads to a new conclusion.

"'You are very indulgent, and can afford to be so,' was my reply, 'to a mere writer of melodrame.'

"'Melodrame!' reiterated the poet; 'and pray what is Macbeth but melodrame? and Richard the Third, and Shakspeare's plays in general, if you come to that? Melodrame!'"

"Here was a conviction!" notes Mr. Fitzball, rushing to a strange conclusion. "Shakspeare, then, is not the legitimate drama!"

Macready records in his diary for 1836: "Was introduced to Mr. Fitzball, the Victor Hugo, as he terms himself, of England, the Victor No-go, in Mr. Keeley's nomenclature." Macready's own opinion of melodrama may be gathered from the clause he was wont to insert in his agreements with managers to the effect that he should not be required to perform any parts that he might consider as "partaking of a melodramatic character."

It was said by Necker that the first French Revolution was decidedly begun when one of the ministers of Louis the Sixteenth went in shoe-strings instead of buckles to an audience of his Majesty. In like manner many have dated the fall of the patent theatres from the production of 'A Tale of Mystery' and the first appearance of the word "melodrama" in their playbills. The minor houses could venture to present, under the vague title of 'burlettas,' irregular performances of a melodramatic complexion, and thus acquired, as Tom Dibdin has noted, "a degree of consideration which in many cases rendered them very formidable rivals" of the privileged establishments. The monopolists could only be defended on the ground that they promoted dramatic performances and literature of a superior class. When they were found entering into undignified rivalry with the minor theatres, emulous of their successes, seizing upon the entertainments of Clerkenwell and Lambeth, the feats of rope-dancers, trained horses and dancing dogs, and transferring them absolutely to the stages of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, it was plain that the time had fully arrived for the abolition of patents and the institution of free trade in dramatic performances. As the patent theatres stooped the minors soared; upon the platform of melodrama they met in combat upon thoroughly equal terms. The Parliamentary Committee

of 1832 declared their opinion that "partly from the difficulty of defining by clear and legal distinction 'the legitimate drama,' and principally from the propriety of giving a full opening as well to the higher as to the more humble orders of dramatic talent," the theatre generally should be allowed to exhibit at their option "the legitimate drama and all such plays as have received or shall receive the sanction of the censor." And further, they stated that "in respect to the extensive privileges claimed by the two metropolitan theatres of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, it was manifest that such privileges had neither preserved the dignity of the drama nor by present administration of the laws been of much advantage to the proprietors of the theatres themselves." The Theatrical Reform Bill did not become law, however, until 1843, when the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction was extended to the whole of the metropolitan parliamentary boroughs, and the monopoly of the legitimate drama so long enjoyed by the patent houses practically ceased to exist. The minor theatres were permitted to be as ambitious as they listed; it became lawful to represent Shakspeare upon any stage.

A petition presented by Macready in the same session of Parliament had been perhaps of some avail in passing the new Act. The actor set forth that he had at different times been lessee and manager of both the patent

houses, and that he had from his early youth devoted his time to the study and representation of the plays of Shakspeare and other dramatic poets; that the patents granted in the first instance for the public benefit and the advancement of dramatic literature had been permitted to fall into unworthy hands, and that all kinds of degrading exhibitions tending not to humanise and refine, but to brutalise and corrupt the public mind, had been introduced upon the patent stages." Further be stated that the continued mismanagement of the patentees had entailed great debts and incumbrances upon the theatres in so much that, although his efforts had been liberally responded to by the public, he had been obliged to retire from the position of manager. The petition concluded: "And thus your petitioner is brought to this pass, that whereas the patent holders are not able, either by themselves or their tenant, to maintain the national drama in their theatres, yet they are armed by law with power to prevent your petitioner from exercising that his art and calling in any other theatre, and to declare that, unless he live on such terms as they may prescribe to him, he shall not by his industry and the use of such abilities as he may possess live at all. Your petitioner therefore humbly prays your honourable house to take his grievance into consideration, and provide such remedy as in your wisdom shall seem fit.'

Sir David Lindsay's Satire of the 'Three Estates' which was enacted at Edinburgh in 1539, before the Queen Regent and the Scottish nobility, is said to have occupied nine hours, or to have lasted "fra nyne houres afore noon till six houres at evin." The dramatic version by Alexandre Dumas of his novel of Monte Christo is perhaps the longest play ever produced. It was necessary to devote two evenings to its performance; on the first were exhibited the betrayal of Edmond Dantes and his imprisonment in the Château d'If; on the second his return from captivity to wreak vengeance upon his foes. The success of the work in Paris on its performance at the Théâtre Historique in 1848 was very great; but an attempt to represent the play in French at Drury Lane by its original interpreters was the cause of something like a riot. The foreign actors were denied a hearing, were received with a storm of premeditated insult and savage reprobation. It was not that the play offended, but it was considered a desecration of the stage of Drury Lane that it should be occupied by French artists! But the theatre had been for some time without a tenant, and it had ruined lessee after lessee, no English speculator could be found to enter upon its management, it was shunned as though it had been a pesthouse. As for desecration, it had already been devoted to very strange

uses; its pit removed, it had been turned into a concert-room; it had been by turns a menagerie and a circus. The legitimate drama had failed; attempts to found a national opera met with like misfortune. M. Jullien, his monthly receipts falling to fifty pounds, while his expenses reached three hundred and fifty pounds, had been driven to the Bankruptcy Court.

The brutal reception of the French actors was for some time an exciting topic. Mr. Macready protested against the misconduct of his countrymen; he had met with great kindness and hospitality when acting in Paris, and regretted that similar courtesy was not shown to the French actors in London. The rioters were denounced in various quarters as "vile rascals" and "wretched ruffians." The House of Lords discussed the matter, when Lord Beaumont declared that our theatres played little beyond translations from the French, and "that if the choice lay between a bad translation of a French piece and the same piece in the original, he should prefer the latter." The company of the Lyceum—a theatre at that time wholly subsisting upon translations from the French—petitioned Parliament to restrict the performances of foreigners in London and close the theatres against them. Certain of the rioters—including sundry actors of small reputation—were brought before the

magistrates at Bow Street. Punch announced that the Dramatic Author's Society had been sworn in as special constables, and had pledged themselves to take up every French subject they could discover! Mr. Albert Smith published a pamphlet, 'Why our Theatres are not supported,' with a few words about the 'Riots at Drury Lane,' in which he ascribed the ruined condition of the London theatres to the folly of their managers in clinging to a worn-out belief in so called legitimate plays by modern writers, for the most part lame and unsatisfactory imitations of the "Elizabethan dramatists," and advocated the production of "dramas of stirring incident, variety of character, and powerful scenic effect, based on an historical foundation of such material as our own age and manner presents us with. Let these," he continued, "be acted by our best actors and placed upon the stage with that artistic study and minute attention to every detail which distinguishes the French stage, and it cannot be doubted but that the same prosperity would be the result, and we should once more have a living and healthy national drama to boast of." The writer had clearly in view melodramas of the Monte Christo pattern; it was pointed out at the time, however, that his description was comprehensive enough to embrace plays of a more poetic and legitimate character and even the writings of Shakspeare.

What remains to us of old-fashioned melodrama of the 'Tale of Mystery' type? It has gone with the Radcliffe school of romance, or is known to the stage of to-day only as a subject for burlesque. "Nothing melodramatic," wrote Lord Byron, urging the purity and severity of one of his tragedies; "no surprises, no starts, no trap-doors, nor opportunities for tossing their heads and kicking their heels." We have long lost sight of the old stage legend of crime and mystery with its pantomimic element, its dumb man or woman skilled in gesticulation, dancing, and gymnastics, and its ghost that rose through the stage while chains rattled terribly, gongs clanged, and blue fire flamed. Strange that these stage effects thrived without the lime-light, which had not yet been invented! Some things may still remain of the melodramatic music: the orchestral tremors and spasms that are supposed to illustrate and assist histrionic perturbations and crises: and now and then the theatre yet betrays traces of that melodramatic system of pronunciation which made curious hash and havoc of the English language, converting true into te-reu, sky into ske-eye, Susan into See-usan, and so on, with a supplementary ah! following every word; but the combats with musical accompaniments, the blows keeping time with the tune fought with iron swords that seemed all basket-hilt; the vaguely

Calabrian backgrounds, the ruined huts, the robbers' caves, the mountain gorges; the bandits and desperadoes, armed to the teeth and black of look as worsted ringlets and burnt cork could make them, strangely costumed in slashed tunics freckled with brass discs or bosses, buff boots and deep gauntlets, and hats of the inverted flower-pot or of the flapping sombrero shape, heavily laden with feathers—these have departed and perhaps left few to regret them. Melodrama has grown and advanced—dead boughs lopped from it, and special developments, in the nature of class, nautical or domestic interests, only prospering in occasional seasons; but its old funambulist origin, its illicit method of coming into the world, the humble position it once occupied in regard to the theatrical family generally, the uneasiness and distrust it at one time occasioned all connected with it—these are things that are becoming more and more forgotten.

CHAPTER X.

THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN IN PARIS.

THE offices exercised here, in relation to the theatres, by our Lord Chamberlain, are in France discharged by a formally constituted authority, entitled, "La Commission de Censure." Absolute liberty has but rarely, and for very limited periods, been enjoyed by the French stage. Only, indeed, when revolution and the overthrow of order have come to its aid; that is to say, from 1791 to 1794; from 1830 to 1835; and from 18 48 to 1850. Some release from constraint occurred also during the National Defence Government of 1870; but the imminent troubles of the country at this time, had, of necessity, reduced the theatre to insignificance, even in the eyes of the most playgoing of publics; and with the entry into Paris of the army of Versailles, and the assumption of power by Marshal MacMahon, the stage was subjected once again to State supervision and control.

The censorship of the drama was first formally established in France in the year

1699. At a much earlier date, however, there had been dealings with the subject on the part of the governing power. An historian of "la censure dramatique" has discovered that, even so far back as the year 789, there was issued an ordinance prohibiting the grossness of speech and gesture, which certain public performers of that remote period had permitted themselves; but these were, of course, buffoons and posture-makers, rather than regular players. In 1402, Charles the Sixth empowered the Confrères de la Passion to present dramatic performances, subject to the supervision of certain officers of the court. Like privileges, with like limitations, were granted by Charles the Seventh, and by Charles the Eighth. During subsequent reigns the actors continued to be subject to intermittent interference of a more or less systematic kind. It was not until the seventeenth century, however, that acting presented any claim to rank as a fine art in France. The Comédie Française had been instituted; Louis the Fourteenth had evinced a desire to patronise and encourage the drama; nevertheless, the actors did not enjoy very good repute—were, in general, but contemptuously regarded by their public, the church especially reprobating them and denouncing the theatre in the strongest term. And then dramatic art had acquired, somehow, certain satirical and aggressive attributes. It opposed formal

authority; it ventured to attack and deride the nobility, the clergy, the magistracy, even royalty itself. In 1706 the Lieutenant of Police was exclusively charged with the control of the theatres, the censorship being comprised in his authority. Still, the king's good pleasure and the influence of the nobility often superseded the dictates of the censor, while parliament and the clergy assumed also a right of independent action in the matter. Thus the proceedings of the censor were not distinguished by uniformity; his decrees were not of equal application throughout the country. Sometimes it happened, indeed, that a play strictly forbidden in Paris was favoured, nevertheless, with unrestricted representation in the provinces.

The Revolution—overturning law, and order and prescription, and doing other very strange things—released the stage from the censorship. The Revolutionary Government, however, entertained parental sentiments, and possessed its own dictatorial element. Up to 1789 the censorship was concerned mainly with preventing attacks upon royalty and religion; moral principles were left to take care of themselves; the stage was not credited with a didactic mission. But, by a decree of 1793, it was ruled that upon certain of the Parisian stages the tragedies of Brutus, William Tell, and Caius Gracchus should be performed regularly three times a week, with other

plays setting forth the glorious incidents and results of revolution, and celebrating the virtues of the champions and defenders of liberty. In August, 1790, La Harpe, at the bar of the National Assembly, had demanded, in the name of the dramatic writers of France, "La liberté spirituelle et industrielle de la scène." Then followed a remarkable debate. Among the speakers were Maury, Robespierre, and Mirabeau. "La censure" was re-established by a gradual process. In the year eight of the Republic, Lucien Bonaparte, being Minister of the Interior, was charged with the supervision of the theatres, and by a decree of Napoleon, bearing date the 8th June, 1806, and audaciously illegal in its terms, the office was permanently re-instituted, and the drama again became subject to the criticism and approval of a Government functionary.

Under virtue of the Charter of 1830, the censorship was absolutely abolished. But Louis Philippe did not long respect the provisions of the Charter; soon, indeed, thrust his umbrella through it in various places. The theatres again lost their liberty in 1835, after a prolonged parliamentary debate, in which figured prominently MM. Sauzet, Odilon Barrot, Liadières, Lamartine, Charlemagne, Etienne, and Thiers. This revived censorship continued in operation until the Revolution of 1848, when the stage was once more set free, only to resume its

bonds, however, some two years later, when reactionary opinions in their turn obtained the ascendency. A law, passed in 1850, restored "la censure," but for a term only. Then came the coup d'état. An unconstitutional decree, issued by Louis Napoleon on the 30th December, 1852, made permanent this provisional measure. This censorship has since flourished very vigorously. The drama was placed under the strictest surveillance. Great watchfulness prevailed lest anything should be said from the stage, directly or indirectly favouring liberty, or opposing absolutism.

Of necessity "la censure" must busy itself about trifles; dictators are sensitive, and little things give them offence. And then it is so easy for the stage to offend, with or without intention! The dramatist's words may be, or may seem, harmless enough; but special emphasis, a gesture, or even a glance on the part of the actor, may invest them with curious point, and reference, and purpose. Moreover, the opportunities of provoking "la censure" are so frequent. Can count be kept of every performance night after night? Can close observation be maintained of every performer upon every stage in France? To prevent a representation, to interdict some particular play, that is not difficult. It is the minor matters that are so hard and trying to deal with. No wonder there exists such an

abundance of ministerial circulars and notifications addressed now to the managers of theatres, and now to the préfets representing the Government in provincial France. If there has been theatrical shortcoming or wrong-doing, it has not been for want of instruction and direction on the part of authority. Every detail of dramatic representation would seem to have been duly considered and made the subject of official correspondence. Much of this correspondence, it may be noted, was made public by the sacking of the Tuileries.

The censorship has for its subordinate officers, "les inspecteurs des théâtres," who are entitled to free admission to the theatres at all times, two seats being expressly reserved for them on the night of the first representation of any new or revived play, whether this event shall occur on a Sunday or not. It is even expressly ordered, that the "coupons" for the two seats shall be sent to the office of the inspectors, not later than the night before the representation in question. The inspectors are also to be present at the three last general rehearsals of any new work, and forty-eight hours' notice of the time fixed for these rehearsals is to be forwarded to them. Moreover one of these rehearsals is to be a complete performance, "avec décors, costumes, et accessoires." No rehearsal is to occupy more than six hours, or, if in the evening,

to be carried on after midnight. A day's interval is always to occur between the last rehearsal and the first public representation. These prescriptions are alleged to be the more necessary in that on certain occasions "la bienveillance de l'administration" has been abused, and rehearsals accomplished so imperfectly and hurriedly, that the inspectors have not had sufficient time allowed them to make the changes they thought necessary in the play, or to suppress such portions of the text as they disapproved. The managers are requested to render these rehearsals as complete as possible, and in such a manner "à ne dissimuler aucun des effets de la représentation." The inspectors are to accord their "visa" only after a thoroughly complete rehearsal has taken place, and after the alterations they have directed have been satisfactorily executed; and the managers are enjoined to treat the inspectors with the respect due to public functionaries engaged in the execution of their legal duties, and to give such instructions as may be necessary to the officers and servants of the theatre, to secure this object. All necessary directions as to the advertisements of the theatre, and the posting of its playbills, the managers are to receive from the Préfet of Police or his agents.

Managers are further cautioned against a reprehensible habit they have acquired, of alloting parts for study by members of their

company, and even of permitting plays to be rehearsed, without having previously obtained for them official sanction. The titles of plays are not to be "dénaturés ou doublés" upon the programmes, which should agree in every respect with the descriptions supplied to the minister, and approved by him. In addition to the examination of the costumes by the inspectors at the dress rehearsals, the manuscripts submitted to the censor are to exhibit fully the characters assuming uniforms, or official costumes, in the course of the performance, with particulars of such home and foreign orders and decorations as it is proposed that the actor should wear. Concerning "gag" and unauthorised "jeux de scène," or stage business, the minister is severe. He finds that official prescriptions notwithstanding plays are not presented in exact conformity with the manuscripts approved by "la commission de censure," and that after the first performance, the actors, believing themselves relieved of responsibility, frequently restore forbidden passages, and introduce phrases and stage business, such as the minister must disapprove. Accordingly a special commissioner is appointed to take note of these breaches of order, so that, professedly, the actors may be constrained to respect the text of their authors. Upon another occasion the minister delivers his opinion upon the subject of slang—the growing fondness of the

stage for "locutions vulgaires et brutales, et de certains termes grossiers empruntés à l'argot." He holds this to be "un mauvais élément de bas comique dont le bon goût se choque, et qu'il n'est pas permis de tolérer davantage." He charges the managers to assist and second in this regard the efforts of "la commission de censure," impressing upon them the necessity of exercising their legitimate influence with that object. All dramatic works cannot, he concedes, pretend to the same purity of language; difference of kind implies and warrants difference of form; but even for the most frivolous of stages, he maintains, there are rules and limitations, which cannot be disregarded, except at the cost of propriety and public morality.

The managers of Paris, in pursuance of the legislation of 1850, were required to submit to the Minister of the Interior, for his examination and approval, a full list of the works constituting the respective repertories of their theatres. The list was to comprehend every play in course of representation, or capable of being represented without further study, by the existing company of each establishment. The manuscripts of new works were to be lodged in duplicate with the minister, at least fifteen days before the projected representation, whatever might be the nature of the production—play, opera, cantata, detached scene,

romance, "chanson ou chansonnette." One copy of the work would be retained by the minister, and deposited among the archives of his office. The other, presuming it to be found unobjectionable, would be returned to the manager, duly signed by the minister, and sanctioned for representation.

The préfets of France have received strict instructions, from time to time, touching the dramatic representations of the provinces. The plays of Paris are to be examined and approved anew, before they can be submitted to a country audience. The repertories of the provincial theatres are to be examined by the préfets, who are to be at liberty to forbid any work they deem objectionable. It is pointed out that much must be left to the discretion of the préfets in this respect, and that no positive rule for general application can be laid down by the minister. A play that may be harmless in one place may produce perilous consequences in another. By way of example, it is pointed out that the opera of 'Les Huguenots,' in spite of its great popularity, has never been presented in countries "où les querelles religieuses ont laissé de funestes souvenirs, et ne pourraient être remises en question sans un certain danger." The préfets are bidden to appreciate local and exceptional circumstances, which may affect a performance from a religious or political point of view. Any sanction they may have unad-

visedly given they are promptly to recall, in the event of the occurrence of unlooked-for disorders in the theatre. In short, the préfets are to prevent absolutely any representation that seems dangerous to the public peace, or likely to engender in the public mind sentiments of discontent and hostility, such as the Government desires specially to suppress and extinguish.

Perhaps no play ever gave so much trouble to censors and licensers as the notorious 'Dame aux Camélias' of M. Alexandre Dumas the younger. We had our difficulties with it in this country; it furnished an illustration of the anomalous system of government to which the British theatre is subject. However, as M. Dumas has himself set forth, the course of the play in France, from the desk to the stage, was attended by quite as many misadventures as have befallen the work in England.

'La Dame aux Camélias,' written in 1849, was first submitted to the manager of the Théâtre Historique (M. Dumas the elder), who undertook its production at an early date. The play was read to the company, and the parts were duly distributed. Then came the termination of M. Dumas's career as a manager and the closing of his theatre. 'La Dame aux Camélias' was left homeless; but one of the actors, M. Hippolyte Worms, who had been present at the reading of the play, furnished a very favourable account of it to M. Bouffé, a

director of the Vaudeville Theatre. In the year 1851 it was resolved that the work should be presented upon the stage of the Vaudeville.

But "la censure" interdicted the play, M. Léon Faucher being then Minister of the Interior. Here was a difficulty indeed! How was it to be overcome? "Nothing is easy in France," writes M. Dumas. "Do you want to know where all the crowds of people you meet in the street are hurrying to? They are going to beg something of somebody—to entreat someone to do something." M. Bouffé had an influential friend—M. Fernand de Montguyon. M. Fernand de Montguyon was the friend of M. de Morny; M. de Morny was the friend of Prince Louis Napoleon, who was then President of the Republic, whose minister was M. Léon Faucher. These were the links in the chain which had to be set in motion, pulled, but not too violently; at one end of it "la censure," at the other M. Dumas the younger.

After an interview with M. Bouffé, M. de Montguyon paid a visit to M. de Morny, and explained to him the state of the case. M. de Morny, desirous of fully comprehending the matter, attended one of the rehearsals of the play. It did not seem to him an objectionable work. He recommended the author, however, to seek literary support—to obtain a sort of certificate of merit from certain of his fellow authors of established reputation. This done,

M. de Morny would be happy to address himself to the Prince-President upon the subject. Accordingly M. Dumas sought his friends MM. Jules Janin, Léon Gozlan, and Emile Augier; the last named had just won from the Academy "le prix de vertu" for his drama of 'Gabrielle.' These gentlemen duly read and considered 'La Dame aux Camélias,' and signed for its author "un brevet de moralité." This was forthwith sent to M. de Morny, who carried it to the Prince-President, who sent it to M. Léon Faucher, who—persisted in prohibiting the representation of M. Dumas's drama.

It was in vain that M. Dumas the elder, in the interest of his son, sought an audience of M. Léon Faucher. M. Dumas the elder was then at the height of his fame; he was the most popular writer in France; he had readers and admirers in every quarter of the globe. The minister declined to see the author, who at length withdrew, meditating over the repetitions of history. His son's experiences had been his own twenty years before, when "la censure" of the Restoration had prohibited his drama of 'Christine.' The Government of the Restoration was not the same as the Government of the Republic, but "la censure" had not changed much. "I'll bide my time," said M. Dumas the younger, as his father had said before him. "There's no knowing what may happen," added M. de Morny, prophetically.

There was nothing to do but to wait; so much was certain. Meantime the prospects of the plan improved somewhat. Madame Doche, the famous actress, had become most anxious to personate M. Dumas's heroine; and Madame Doche exercised considerable influence over M. de Persigny, an important personage at that date.

But what chiefly helped the play on to the stage was the coup d'état. From the famous 2nd of December M. de Morny filled the place of Minister of the Interior, which M. Léon Faucher had been constrained to vacate. "I am not naturally malevolent," writes M. Dumas, "but I could not shed tears at the fall of M. Faucher. I will even confess that it made me very happy." For, three days after the nomination of M. de Morny, 'La Dame aux Camélias' was formally licensed for representation. It was first produced on the 2nd of February, 1853. Its successful "run" was only stopped by the arrival of holiday time and hot weather. It established M. Dumas the younger as a dramatist—although it had been hurriedly written in eight days, and is, in truth, very inferior, as a work of art, to his later writings for the theatre—and it made the fortunes of the Vaudeville management.

The story of the misadventures of La Dame aux Camélias is not yet complete, however. When, on the re-opening of the Vaudeville in the autumn, it was proposed to reproduce the

play and renew its success, "la censure" again intervened to prevent the representation. M. de Morny was no longer Minister of the Interior. Strange to say, that office was now filled by one whose friendship for 'La Dame aux Camélias' had, at one time, been deemed quite beyond question. M. de Persigny was minister, and there were to be no more "cakes and ale!" But this state of things was not to be borne. M. de Morny, acting on behalf of the dramatist, had submitted to the decision of M. Léon Faucher. That was in the days of the Republic, however. The Empire was now at hand. M. de Morny simply overruled M. de Persigny, and 'La Dame aux Camélias' again took possession of the stage, from which it has not since been driven.

Yet M. Dumas, all his experiences of "la censure" notwithstanding, offers no serious opposition to the institution. "Denounce it," he writes, "but, at the same time, pray that it may not be abolished!" He ridicules it, he despises it; still he would have it preserved. But his argument arises from his fears. He dreads lest something worse should happen to the dramatist. "Suppress the censorship," he says, "and the day after we are under the jurisdiction of the police!" The theatres will be assimilated to the street, and at the first scandal or disorder the constable will shut up the shop, and confiscate its wares. We shall be relieved of a well-intentioned

functionary, and fall into the hands of spies and informers; and whenever the Government of the time needs, for purposes of its own, a theatrical scandal, it will send some fifty of these gentlemen to the theatre, to excite a disturbance, and there will be an end of play, playwright, players, and playhouses. Then genuine regret will be felt for the good old 'censure,' with its glassless spectacles and its blunt scissors, sitting quietly in its chimney corner—a somnolent duenna, whose keys the dramatic muse easily filches when desirous of escape and freedom.

"No," says M. Dumas, "it is better to respect 'la censure.' Let us wrap it up carefully in cotton wool—it is but a phantom enemy. If it did not exist, it would be advisable to create it. If it injures anybody, it does not injure us. We have the right of crying aloud against it: a good thing for French lungs needing such exercise. But, in truth, it transacts our business for us better than we could do it ourselves. It stands between us and the Government. It is our protection, guarantee, and security. When once its 'visa' has been obtained, we can sleep safely and soundly. If the Government complains to us, we reply: 'It's your affair now; it does not concern us. Your 'censure' has approved; blame your 'censure' if you like; don't blame us.'"

Further, M. Dumas argues, "'La censure'

has never been able to withhold from representation any work of real merit, from 'Tartuffe' to the 'Mariage de Figaro:' from the 'Mariage de Figaro' to 'Marion Delorme,' from 'Marion Delorme' to the 'Fils de Giboyer.' Sooner or later, 'la censure' has had to give way; the dramatist forces the barricade, or climbs over it, or creeps beneath it. 'La censure' is a folly of a harmless kind—a superstition—dear to Governments; respect it therefore! It costs but fifty thousand francs; it feeds and clothes various persons, perhaps six in number altogether. It is but a scarecrow which frightens no one—just such a scarecrow as gardeners, cherishing tradition, are careful to affix to their cherry-trees, to save the fruit from the attacks of the sparrows; who, nevertheless, knowing all about the scarecrow, visit the trees persistently, and consume as much fruit as they list. But the gardener is satisfied; he has done his duty; and the sparrows have done theirs according to their lights. It is a good thing to laugh," says M. Dumas. "Laugh, therefore, at 'la censure.' Don't mistake for a serious thing what is a mere joke. If we cannot laugh at it, what has become of the good old French light-heartedness of Rabelais, of Lesage, of Voltaire?"

It is hard, our author confesses, that for long years Victor Hugo should have been forbidden his native stage; that the Lucrèce

of Ponsard should be denied representation; that various other dramatists should be condemned to silence; that numberless unknown writers should continue unknown, their title to fame forfeited, their claim to good fortune ignored by an irresponsible and despotic institution. But what then? All chefs-d'œuvre (including the plays of Shakspeare) are born under a despotic Government. A chef-d'œuvre has time before it, it can afford to wait; and it is much more difficult to write a good play than to obtain its representation after it has been written. Let us begin with writing good plays—that done, it will be time enough to attack 'la censure.'

"No doubt," M. Dumas continues, "what we all desire is absolute liberty, the only censor the playgoer; no third party intervening between the producer and the consumer, the dramatist and his public; the abolition of all restrictions, surprises, interferences. That would be noble, simple, dignified, and honourable to all concerned. But it cannot be—it is a dream, impossible of realisation in France—'pays flétri par la censure.'" And in England—well, M. Dumas does not know much about England, but he knows that, with all its boasted freedom, England has never witnessed in its theatres any representation of his 'Dame aux Camélias!'

M. Dumas's argument must not be accepted too literally. His mind is not specially logi-

cal, and he writes for effect and to startle, rather than to convince. His defence of "la censure," if defence it is to be considered, was penned under the Empire, when it behoved a writer to be conciliatory or to be silent. If he did not really believe the Government of that day to be the best of all possible Governments, and its "censure" the best of all possible "censures," it was prudent to pretend that he did. And he restricted himself to choosing between the despotism of the police-serjeants, and the despotism of "la commission de censure," it not occurring to him, apparently, that he had any other choice in the matter. It is quite clear to him, indeed, that despotism of some kind is not to be avoided, all the circumstances of the case being duly considered. Moreover, Government is, in his eyes, invariably hostile and oppressive; insomuch that such an institution as "la censure" is a convenient screen and buffer, to be interposed between the individual and authority. His hopefulness as to the ultimate success of merit, all action of the censorship to the contrary notwithstanding, is a Frenchman's hopefulness, founded on experience of great and sudden changes in the order of things. It seems safe in France to count upon the coming of a restoration, or a coup d'état, or a revolution to right the wronged—or, at any rate, to upset authority, and create confusion, in which somehow, men

may contrive to enjoy their own again. In such wise results the opinion that "la censure" may be submitted to, because it cannot be long-lived; that the law of change affects it vitally and incessantly; and that assuredly the Léon Fauchers of Government will be replaced by the De Mornys, and the De Mornys by the De Persignys. The French dramatist has but to wait.

CHAPTER XI.

AL FRESCO.

Among the changes that have gradually come over London, may be noted the decline and departure of a certain class of pleasure-grounds. Land increasing in value, and the inhabitants multiplying more and more, the city bursting its original boundaries, and covering the country round about with a sort of overflow of bricks and mortar, little room has been left for bowling greens, grass plots and gardens, such as were once to be counted among the appurtenances of houses situated even in the heart of the capital. Alteration has occurred also even in the manners and customs of our citizens; or they have become in these later days more susceptible of climatic influences. They no longer entertain themselves of evenings in the open air; they dread too much the possibilities of bleak winds or wet weather. They prefer to be pleased by musical or theatrical performances under cover. Formerly we Londoners lived much more of an out-of-

door life; our city was rich in public gardens and al fresco places of pleasure. One after the other all have gone. Music-halls thrive and theatres flourish, but our Vauxhalls have vanished. And we were once rich in Vauxhalls.

Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, were genuine gardens once, with archery butts, a tilt yard, a boxing green, a bathing pond, and a pheasant yard. The name was due to a jet or spring of water, which upon the pressure of the foot sprung up and "wetted whoever was foolish or ignorant enough to tread upon it." Mechanical water springs were deemed excellent practical jokes in the days of Elizabeth, and indeed long afterwards. Such device existed in recent years at Chatsworth and at Enstone, in Oxfordshire. The bathing pond was supplied by leaden pipes from St. James's Fields. In an account of certain expenses incurred for "needful reparacons" of Spring Gardens, in 1614, appears a charge of four shillings for "two clucking hens to set upon the pheasant eggs." There was an ordinary at Spring Gardens, the charge being six shillings per meal; and much drinking of wine under the trees went on all day long. The company stayed until midnight, refreshing themselves at "a certain cabaret" in the middle of the gardens, with tarts, neat's tongues, salt meats, and Rhenish wine. "Shall we make a fling to London, and see how the spring appears

there in the Spring Gardens; and in Hyde Park, to see the races, horse and foot?" asks one of the characters in Brome's comedy, 'A Jovial Crew,' 1652. Evelyn records in 1658 that he "went to see a coach race in Hyde Park, and collationed in Spring Gardens." But this was possibly the new Spring Gardens, opened at the north-east corner of the Haymarket, "in the fields beyond the Mews," where was built "a fair house and two bowling greens, made to entertain gamesters and bowlers," at a cost of £4,000. For Evelyn had previously noted the seizing and shutting up of Spring Gardens by Cromwell and his partisans in 1654, so that the Mulberry Garden had become a fashionable place of rendezvous and refreshment for ladies and gallants. In a glowing description of Spring Gardens, published in 1659, mention is made of the "thickets and enclosures, the solemness of the grove, the warbling of the birds," &c. The grounds, it is stated, gave entrance into "the spacious walks at St. James's."

Spring Gardens opened again after Cromwell and his partisans had closed them; but they were now known as the Old Spring Gardens, to distinguish them from the New Spring Gardens established at Vauxhall about 1660. And presently houses were erected upon the ground, known as Inner Spring Gardens and Outer Spring Gardens. The place had ceased to exist as a public resort for

purposes of entertainment. The New Spring Gardens in the Haymarket did not long survive. "Lammas-money," on account of Piccadilly House and Bowling Green was paid, however, as late as 1670. The Tennis Court in James's Street is the last vestige of the Haymarket or Piccadilly Spring Gardens. The Mulberry Gardens occupied the site of the present Buckingham Palace and Gardens. The grounds were demised by Charles the Second, in 1673, to Bennett, Earl of Arlington, at a nominal rent. Pepys writes in 1668: "To the Mulberry Gardens, where I never was before, and find it a very silly place, worse than Spring Gardens, and but little company, only a wilderness here that is somewhat pretty." In the following year Pepys was regaled at the Mulberry Gardens with a Spanish olio, and pronounced it "a very noble dish, such as I never saw before or any more of." James the First had concerned himself about the planting of mulberry trees, hoping to encourage the manufacture of the English silks. In James's time Shakspeare had planted his famous mulberry tree at Stratford. Sedley wrote a comedy called 'The Mulberry Garden;' and the dramatists, his contemporaries Shadwell, Etherege, and Wycherley, make frequent mention of the place. John Dryden, wearing a sword and a "Chedreux wig," was won't to eat tarts at the Mulberry Garden with his friend, Madame Reeve. The

following lines occur in Dr. King's 'Art of Cookery,' 1709:

> The fate of things he's always in the dark;
> What cavalier would know St. James's Park;
> For Locket's stands where gardens once did spring,
> And wild ducks quack where grasshoppers did sing;
> A princely palace on that space does rise
> Where Sedley's noble muse found mulberries.

Locket's was a fashionable ordinary or restaurant, which stood on the ground once part of Old Spring Gardens, and now occupied by Drummond's banking-house, Charing Cross.

Pepys also mentions 'Sparagus Gardens, a place of amusement, concerning which even antiquaries have little to tell. It was situate in Lambeth Marsh, and adjoined the better known Cuper's Gardens. A comedy by Richard Brome, called 'The 'Sparagus Gardens,' was acted at the Salisbury Court Theatre in 1635. Pepys writes in 1668: "To the fishmonger's, and bought a couple of lobsters, and over to the 'Sparagus Gardens, thinking to have met Mr. Pierce and his wife and Knipp."

Evelyn, in 1661, found the New Spring Gardens at Lambeth "a pretty contrived plantation." Pepys writes in 1665: "By water to Fox Hall, and there walked an hour alone observing the several humours of the citizens that were this holiday pulling off cherries and God knows what." The manor of Vauxhall, properly Fulke's Hall, derived its name from Fulke de Branté, who married Margaret, Earl Baldwin's mother, and thus

obtained the wardship of her son. The estates subsequently passing into the possession of the Crown, was granted by Edward the Third to the Black Prince, who gave it to the church of Canterbury. Upon the suppression of the monasteries, and the appropriation of church lands, Henry the Eighth confirmed the Dean and Chapter in their possession of the manor. During the two centuries that Vauxhall Gardens flourished, it probably occurred to few visitors that they were treading upon ground which was so far consecrated, that it had been the absolute property of the Church. In later times, however, the estate was described as "copyhold, containing eight acres, subject to a heriot or fine of five hundred pounds to the Prince of Wales, the lord of the manor."

Vauxhall Gardens became a famous resort, the model or pattern upon which other gardens were formed, until "Vauxhall" was recognised all the world over as the proper title for an open-air nocturnal place of entertainment. As early as 1668 Pepys had written of his supper there "in an arbour," with Henry Killigrew, "a rogue newly come back out of France, but still in disgrace at court," young Newport, and others; "but, Lord!" he exclaims, "their mad talk did make my heart ake!" Refreshments "in an arbour," it may be noted, were long deemed peculiarly agreeable to British taste and

appetite. A year before Pepys had observed upon the pleasantness and cheapness of Vauxhall, "for a man may spend what he will or nothing all as one." He had noted, too, the number of the company, and how "mighty divertising," it was "to hear the nightingale and the birds, and here fiddles, and there a harp, and here a Jew's trump, and here laughing, and there fine people walking," &c. Jew's harps, by-the-bye, survive, and are often heard; but a Jew's trump strikes one as a less familiar instrument. Pepys, however, had also to consider "how rude some of the gallants of the town are become;" and to be troubled by "the confidence of the vice of the age." It was in 1667, according to Aubrey's Survey, that Sir Samuel Morland, having obtained a lease of Vauxhall House and grounds, built there a fine room, the inside all of looking-glass and fountains, with a figure of Punchinello, very well carved, on the outside, holding up a dial, which the high winds subsequently destroyed.

The new Spring Gardens obtained frequent mention in the comedies of Wycherley, Etherege, Sedley, and Congreve; and it may be remembered how the spectator and his friend Sir Roger de Coverley took water at the Temple Stairs, the country knight selecting a waterman who had lost his right leg in the glorious action of La Hogue, and paid a

visit to the Fox Hall. It was the month of May; and Spring Garden was pronounced to be especially pleasant at that period of the year. The spectator, considering the fragrancy of the walks and flowers, with the choirs of birds that sung under the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shades, could not but look on the place as "a kind of Mahometan Paradise." Sir Roger was reminded of a little coppice by his house in the country, which his chaplain used to call an aviary of nightingales. "You must understand," said the knight, "that there is nothing in the world that pleases a man in love so much as your nightingale Ah, Mr. Spectator, the many moonlight nights that I have walked by myself, and thought on the widow by the music of the nightingale." They concluded their walk with a glass of Burton ale and a slice of hung beef; the good knight sending a waiter with the remainder of their supper to the one-legged waterman. The waiter was about to be saucy because of the oddness of this proceeding; but the Spectator "ratified the knight's commands with a peremptory look."

In 1732 New Spring Gardens came into the possession of Jonathan Tyers, who opened them in June with a grand entertainment called Ridotto al fresco, the Prince of Wales being present, and the company wearing

dominoes, masks, and lawyer's gowns. The charge for admission was one guinea; four hundred persons were present, and, to preserve order, one hundred of the foot guards were posted round the gardens. The title of Spring Gardens was continued until 1785, when they were called the Royal Vauxhall Gardens. To the last, however, the magistrates' license was always applied for on account of "The Spring Garden, Vauxhall."

In 1739 the admission was one shilling, but many subscribed for the season of three months. It was publicly announced: "A thousand tickets only will be delivered out at twenty-five shillings each, the silver of every ticket to be worth three shillings and twopence, and to admit two persons every evening — Sundays excepted — through the season. Every person coming without a ticket to pay one shilling each time for admittance. No servants in livery to walk in the gardens. All subscribers are desired not to permit their tickets to get into the hands of persons of evil repute, it being absolutely necessary to exclude all such." Hogarth, who was living in Lambeth Terrace, seems to have taken a lively interest in the gardens under Tyer's management; he designed the tickets, and the pictures in the saloon and supper boxes, the paintings in the saloon being executed at the cost of five hundred pounds each by Hayman and Mortimer.

A statue of Handel, by Roubillac, stood in the centre of the gardens. In recognition of Hogarth's services, Tyers presented him with a gold ticket of perpetual admission for six persons any night. The concerts were at first purely instrumental, but in 1745 singing was introduced; "The eccentric Tom Collet" leading the band, and Dr. Worgun playing the organ. Westminister Bridge was not completed until 1750; for the accommodation of his performers, therefore, Tyers built a handsome barge, which carried them from Palace Yard Old Stairs and back again when the entertainments were over.

In the Connoisseur for 1755 there is enumeration of the changes in public pleasures consequent upon the varying of the seasons. The theatrical gentry having dissipated the gloom of winter evenings, now that the long days are coming on, are described as "packing up their tragedy wardrobes, together with a sufficient quantity of thunder and lightning for the delight and amazement of the country;" while the several public gardens near the metropolis trim their trees, level their walks, and burnish their lamps for the reception of the Londoners. "At Vauxhall the artificial ruins are repaired, the cascade is made to spout with several additional streams of block tin, and they have touched up all the pictures which were damaged last year by the fingering of those curious connoisseurs

who could not be satisfied without feeling whether the figures were alive." Then follows an account of a visit to Vauxhall, paid by an honest citizen, his wife, and two daughters. They are regaled with a chicken and a shilling plate of ham. "The old gentleman, at every bit he put in his mouth, amused himself by saying: "There goes twopence, there goes threepence, there goes a groat. Zounds! a man at these places should not have a swallow as wide as a tom-tit.' "

Five years earlier Walpole had visited Vauxhall upon the invitation of Lady Caroline Petersham. It was a river party, "a boat of French horns attending;" and the little Miss Ashe, "'the pollard ash,' as her friends called her, singing to entertain the company." Lord Granby arrived "very drunk, from Jenny's Whim," a tea-garden at Chelsea; and Lord Oxford, Horace's brother, was fetched from an adjoining box to help minced chicken. "We minced seven chickens into a china dish, which Lady Caroline stewed over a lamp, with three pats of butter and a flagon of water, stirring, and rattling, and laughing, and we every minute expecting the dish to fly about our ears. She had brought Betty the fruit-girl with hampers of strawberries and cherries from Roger's, and made her wait upon and then made her sup by us at a little table. . . . . It was three o'clock before we got home."

Upon the death of Jonathan Tyers, in 1767, his son, Thomas Tyers, the Tom Tyers of Dr. Johnson and Boswell, and the Tom Restless of the *Idler*, Number 48, succeeded to the management of the gardens. Boswell has left a glowing account of "that excellent place of public amusement, Vauxhall Gardens, which," he writes, "must ever be an estate to its proprietor, as it is peculiarly adapted to the taste of the English nation; there being a mixture of curious show, gay exhibition, music—vocal and instrumental—not too refined for the general ear; for all which only a shilling is paid; and, though last not least, good eating and drinking for those who choose to purchase that regale." The best English singers appeared from time to time in the gardens. At first they objected to lend their services, "so strange and uncouth did the proposal appear to them of singing in the open air . . . . but the trial was no sooner made than the judicious improvement was so highly admired as to give the proprietor ample reason to rejoice at its adoption." Fireworks it is said were not exhibited until 1798, and even then were only displayed occasionally, although of the smaller place of entertainment known as Cuper's Gardens, 'The Connoisseur' writes in 1755, that "its magazine is furnished with an extraordinary supply of gunpowder, to be shot off in squibs and skyrockets, or whirled away in blazing suns and

catherine-wheels." The price of admission was one shilling up to the summer of 1792, when, because of the increased decorations and attractions, the charge was raised to two shillings. "I cannot approve of this," writes Boswell; "the company may be more select, but a number of the honest commonalty are, I fear, excluded from sharing in elegant and innocent entertainments." Subsequently the admission became three and sixpence and four shillings.

The elder Tyers was naturally querulous, and his temper was much tried by the wet weather, which often grievously affected his seasons at Vauxhall. To him seems really due the lament afterwards appropriated by Mr. Graves in the comedy of 'Money,' to the effect that "if he had been brought up to be a hatter, he believed little boys would have been born without heads." A farmer once plagued him with enquiries as to when he intended to open his gardens. He asked in return why the farmer was so anxious for information on the subject. "Why, sir," he said, "I'm thinking of sowing my turnips, and I want to know for certain when we shall have rain."

Vauxhall long continued to be a most fashionable resort, enjoying the special patronage of George, Prince of Wales. The season usually commenced on the king's birthday, June 4th; the prince's birthday, August 12th,

being the great festival of the year. Then there were galas to celebrate the happy recovery of the king, or in honour of distinguished foreign visitors, or because of victories achieved by our land and sea forces, or the proclamation of peace. In 1813 occurred the Vittoria fête, to celebrate Lord Wellington's triumphs in the Peninsula. The Duke of York, commander-in-chief, by desire of the Prince Regent, with the assistance of one hundred stewards of the first distinction, presided at a grand dinner of a thousand gentlemen, at two guineas per head. There was afterwards a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music. Some twelve thousand persons visited the gardens, "and the difficulty at night of procuring refreshments was such," writes Parke, the oboe player, "that in various parts of the splendidly illuminated gardens were seen a brace of dukes regaling themselves from a wine-bottle and glasses they held in their hands; a bevy of countesses devouring a cold chicken which they had separated with their delicate fingers; and a plump citizen's wife, who would have fainted had she not been timely relieved by a glass of water with a little brandy in it. Amidst the elegant confusion which prevailed, I had the good fortune to sup in a private room in the house of the proprietor of the gardens with some friends, who were afterwards joined by the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan, one of the stewards, whose

brilliant conversation I had the pleasure to share till daylight the next morning."

The first balloon ascent from Vauxhall was Garnerin's, in 1804, when he rose four thousand feet and descended in a parachute. In 1817, and for some following seasons, Madame Saqni, the famous rope-dancer, appeared at Vauxhall, and occasioned much excitement by her daring performances. In 1828 Italian operas were performed in the saloon, and a ballet-theatre was opened for serious and comic dancing. In 1830 Sir Henry Bishop was musical director, and a dramatic company was engaged for the performance of burlettas. But already the glory of Vauxhall was passing away. It survived its illustrious patron, George the Fourth, but only to linger on in a decrepit and degraded state. Parke, even in 1830, questioned whether even Bishop's superior ability could restore the place to its "pristine excellence," although he might, "by inundating it with the powerful strains of his harmony," partially cleanse the Augean stable. Croker, in his edition of Boswell, 1847, spoke contemptuously of Vauxhall, as "long closed, and only occasionally used for letting off a balloon or some such exhibition." But this was incorrect; the end had not yet come.

In 1838 the charge for admission had been reduced to one shilling. Fashion had departed; there was an effort to attract popularity—even vulgarity. Balloon ascents were

now frequent; a circus was added, with horses from Astley's. Poses plastiques were brought from Paris, and a chorus from the German opera at Drury Lane. In 1841 the estate was offered for sale, but bought in. Certain of the old decorations were disposed of, however, including the Hogarth and Hayman pictures, now in a very infirm condition; they produced but a few shillings. In 1845 Musard conducted the orchestra, and masquerades were given, very dissolute as to character. In 1846, under Mr. Wardell's management, came further violation of Vauxhall traditions. The famous oil-lamps, many-coloured and multitudinous, were replaced by gas-jets, and the members of the orchestra abandoned the cocked hats they had worn from time immemorial. The master of the ceremonies—for of old such a functionary had presided—was no longer visible, or was represented only by a transparent portrait of the deceased Mr. Simpson, in a courteous attitude, full-dressed, pantalooned and pumped, lifting his chapeau bras to greet the visitor. In 1854 the Secretary of State interfered to prevent certain dangerous and cruel exhibitions—balloons carrying horses, or with acrobats on trapezes slung from the cars. In 1859 the gardens finally closed. The site is now built over and occupied by St. Peter's Church, a school of art, and numerous streets.

Vauxhall outlived many of its rivals. On

the Surrey side of the Thames the Waterloo Bridge Road runs through the centre of what was once Cuper's Gardens, known commonly as Cupid's Gardens, a place of entertainment of the Vauxhall pattern, first opened to the public in 1678. Aubrey, in his account of Surrey, writes, "Near the Bankside lies a very pleasant garden, in which are fine walks, known by the name of Cupid's Gardens. They are the estate of Jesus College, in Oxford, and erected by one who keeps a public-house; which, with the convenience of its arbours, walks, and several remains of Greek and Roman antiquities, have made this place much frequented." The gardens obtained their name from Boydell Cuper, a gardener in the employ of Thomas, Earl of Arundel. When Arundel House in the Strand was taken down, the gardener obtained many mutilated marbles from his master's famous collection, carried them across the river, and erected them as decorations of his gardens. Fragments of an antique figure were even discovered in the mud of the Thames when Sir William Chambers was digging the foundation of a portion of Somerset House; and it was supposed that the gardener might have lost certain of his treasures in the endeavour to convey them over the water. A Mrs. Evans, whose husband had formerly kept the old tavern, the Hercules Pillars, in Fleet Street, opposite

Clifford's Inn, became tenant of Cuper's Gardens in 1736, erected an organ and an orchestra, and provided entertainments of fireworks. Cuper's Gardens indeed became famous for fireworks. There is extant an old song in commemoration of the pleasures of the place, beginning:

'Twas down in Cuper's gardens
For pleasure I did go,
To see the fairest flowers
That in that garden grow;
The first it was the jessamine,
The lily, pink, and rose,
And surely they're the fairest flowers
That in that garden grows.
I'd not walked in that garden
The part of half an hour,
When there I saw two pretty maids
Sitting under a shady bower.
The first was lovely Nancy,
So beautiful and fair,
The other was a vixen,
Who did the laurel wear.

The gardens maintained their popularity for some years, but were suppressed in 1753, and converted to the uses of trade. J. T. Smith, in his 'Life of Nollekens, relates that he walked over the gardens "when they were occupied by Messrs. Beaufoy for their wine and vinegar works, and I then saw many of the old lamp-irons along the paling of the gardens." Dr. Johnson related that once, driving in a coach by Cuper's Gardens, then untenanted, he jestingly proposed that he, Beauclerk, and Langton, should take them; "and we amused ourselves with scheming

how we should all do our parts." Old Lady Sydney Beauclerk, the mother of Topham Beauclerk, was much angered, however, and said, "An old man should not put such things in young people's heads." Johnson noted for the information of Boswell: "She had no notion of a joke, sir; had come late into life, and had a mighty unpliable understanding."

Vauxhall had other rivals and imitators on its own side of the Thames. There opened in 1698 a place of entertainment, called Lambeth Wells. A mineral spring had been discovered, and the waters were dispensed at "a penny per quart to the affluent, and gratis to the poor." A performance of music commenced so early as seven in the morning, the charge for admission being threepence. A monthly concert, on a more important scale, was afterwards given under the direction of Mr. Starling Goodwin, organist of St. Saviour's Church; lectures were also delivered with experiments in natural philosophy by Erasmus King, who had been coachman to Dr. Desaguliers, the price of admission being raised to sixpence. The place existed so late as 1752, when "a penny wedding, after the Scotch fashion, for the benefit of a young couple," was advertised to be celebrated there. But the Wells were held to be a nuisance at last; the premises were closed for some time, the concert-room being afterwards let as a Methodist meeting-house.

Eventually a public-house, with the sign of the Fountain, supplying strong rather than mineral waters, was the only surviving trace of Lambeth Wells.

There was a Spa, too, in existence between 1784 and 1804, farther on at Bermondsey, of which the Spa Road is the only relic; while on the Lambeth side of Westminster Bridge flourished, between 1788 and 1799, the Apollo Gardens, opened by one Clagget, an ingenious musician, who in 1793 published a description of an organ he had invented, "made without pipes, strings, bells, or glasses; the only instrument in the world that will never require to be re-tuned." The gardens possessed a spacious concert-room, a number of elegant pavilions or alcoves, ornamented with paintings, "relating to romantic histories, particularly the different adventures of Don Quixote;" with a fine orchestra in the centre of the grounds. Finch's Grotto, "on the plan of Vauxhall," opened to the public in 1770, and thrived for some time. This was situated in Gravel Lane, Southwark. "An orchestra and a band of musicians added to the rural character of the place, drew a numerous body of visitors." Little is known of the grotto or of the proprietor, William Finch, who gave his name to it; but a story has survived concerning one of its singers, a North Briton named Snows. He was, it seems, required to sing a ballad beginning:—

Where no ripened summer glows
On the lap of northern snows,
Only let my nymph be there
Jocund spring will soon appear.

He was suddenly interrupted by an Irish visitor, who exclaimed with an oath of indignation: "Och, Mister Northern Snows with his nymph on his lap; a mighty pretty scene to entertain decent people with."

No doubt the closing years of Vauxhall suffered from the competition of the Surrey Zoological Gardens near the Elephant and Castle. These grounds were laid out in 1831–2 by Mr. Cross, who had owned the menagerie at Exeter Change, and afterwards at the King's Mews, Charing Cross. Cunningham, in his Handbook of London, 1850, described the animals as superior to those possessed by the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park. But the Surrey Gardens, in truth, depended for success less upon zoology than upon music and fireworks. A sheet of water, some three acres in extent, added greatly to the attractions of the place, and was of service to the large paintings of Vesuvius and Hecla, Rome and Venice, Old London, Hamburg, and Edinburgh, which, from time to time, occupied and formed excuses for brilliant displays of fireworks. A large hall, capable of holding twelve thousand persons, twenty feet longer and thirty feet wider than Exeter Hall, was erected in 1856, to be totally destroyed by fire five years later.

In this hall a public dinner was given to the Guards returned from the Crimea in 1856; in the same year, owing to a false alarm of fire raised during one of Mr. Spurgeon's religious services in the hall, eight persons were killed, and thirty seriously injured. For some time the place was devoted to the use of St. Thomas's Hospital during the rebuilding of that institution. The Surrey Gardens have since been sold for building purposes, following the fate of Vauxhall.

In Mist's Journal for April 16th, 1720, it was announced that Belsize House had been converted into a place of public amusement. The advertisement was in these terms: "Whereas the ancient and noble house near Hampstead, commonly called Bellasis House, is now taken and fitted up for the entertainment of gentlemen and ladies during the whole summer season; the same will be opened on Easter Monday next with an uncommon solemnity of music and dancing. This undertaking will exceed all of the kind that has hitherto been known near London, commencing every day at six in the morning, and continuing till eight at night, all persons being privileged to admittance without necessity of expense." The proprietor of the place was one Howell, who enjoyed repute as a humourist, and was commonly known as the Welsh ambassador. He is referred to as "the man that keeps Belsize," in a letter from the

Countess Cowper to Mrs. Clayton, afterwards Lady Sundon, dated June 21st, 1722: "We are very dull here this summer; for there have been so many deaths in this neighbourhood, among the gay part of it, that we have no sort of diversion. The man that keeps Belsize is setting up a long room at North Hall, and his music plays from sunrise to sunset, but vainly, for nobody here cares to go to him, especially since they heard he intended to have forty beds for the accommodation of gentlemen and ladies from London." There were difficulties in getting back to town after a day at Belsize: the roads were by no means free from highwaymen and footpads. A handbook was issued, therefore, announcing that "twelve stout fellows, completely armed, do patrol between Belsize and London." As further inducements to visit Belsize, it was stated that "the park, wilderness, and gardens" had undergone great improvements and were "fitted with variety of birds, which compose a most melodious and delightful harmony." And information was conveyed to "persons who desire to walk and to divert themselves," that they might breakfast at Belsize on tea and coffee as cheaply as in their own apartments. In Read's Journal for July 15th, 1721, it is recorded: "Last Saturday their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales dined at Belsize House, near Hampstead, attended by several persons of quality, where they were

entertained with the diversion of hunting and such others as the place afforded, with which they seemed well pleased, and at their departure were very liberal to the servants."

In a few years, however, Belsize ceased to be a place of public entertainment, and was again occupied as a private residence. The name is preserved, but nothing of the house now remains, and the extensive grounds are covered with streets and terraces, crowds of villas detached and semi-detached. The old mansion house of Belsize had been pulled down and rebuilt in the reign of Charles the Second; and this new house had been in its turn much altered and reconstructed early in the eighteenth century. The fine old carved staircase, disposed of by public auction in 1854, had pertained to the second house. The estate of fifty-seven acres with the mansion house, called in old writings the Manor of Belses, had been granted in 1317 to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster by Sir Roger le Brabazon, for the founding of a chantry at the alter of St. John the Evangelist, for the souls of Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, Blanch his wife, and the said Sir Roger. Belsize House had been tenanted by Sir Armigal Ward, Clerk of the Council to Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, the first Englishman who made discoveries in America. He died at Belsize in 1568, and was buried in the parish church of Hampstead, where lies also interred his son

Sir William, Clerk of the Council to Queen Elizabeth, ambassador to Spain, and afterwards lieutenant of the Tower. At a later date Belsize became the seat of Thomas, Lord Wotton, whose eldest daughter and co-heir married Henry, Lord Stanhope, son of the first Earl of Chesterfield.

Pepys writes in his diary, May 7th, 1668: "Then we abroad to Marrowbone, and there walked in the garden, the first time I ever was there, and a pretty place it is." The manor or parish of Marylebone is supposed to own its name to the same bourne, brook, or rivulet, from which Tyburn and Westbourne derive their appellations, the parish church being originally dedicated to St. Mary-le-Bourne—i.e. St. Mary on the Brook. Some, however, would regard Marylebone as an ungrammatical corruption of Mary-la-bonne. On this subject De Quincey wrote amusingly: "If I have read one I have read twenty letters addressed to newspapers, denouncing the name of a great quarter in London, Marylebone, as ludicrously ungrammatical. The writers had learned or were learning French, and they had thus become aware that neither the article nor the adjective was right. True, not right for the current age; but quite right for the age in which the name arose: but for want of elder French they did not know that in our Chaucer's time both were right. Le was then the feminine article as

well as masculine, and bone was then the true form for the adjective." The celebrated garden and bowling-green of Marylebone occupied the site of Beaumont Street, and of portions of Devonshire Street and Devonshire Place. The grand orchestra of the garden stood on the site of No. 17, Devonshire Place. The bowling green is referred to in Pope's well known lines:

> At the Groom-Porters battered bullies play,
> Some dukes at Marybone bowl time away.

And Marylebone Gardens obtains mention in 'The Beggar's Opera.' Indeed, in the course of a performance of that work at Drury Lane in 1820, Madame Vestris personating Captain Macheath, a new scene was introduced representing Marylebone Gardens "as they were about the time when the 'Beggar's Opera' was written." An advertisement published in 1718 informed all persons of quality, ladies and gentlemen, that the usual illuminations in honour of His Majesty's birthday had been postponed, "by reason there is a ball in the gardens at Kensington with illuminations, and at Richmond also." It was held, presumably, that the entertainments would suffer if they were all presented on the same evening. Before 1737 no charge was made for admission to the gardens; but in that year Mr. Gough, the proprietor, resolved to charge each visitor one shilling for entrance money, returning an equivalent in viands." Mr. Gough

greatly improved the property, erecting an orchestra, and offering musical performances, vocal and instrumental, "in the manner of Vauxhall." Fireworks also formed an important part of the entertainment. In 1772 a certain Signor Torre was employed to prepare a representation of Mount Etna, in addition to the ordinary display of wheels, suns, stars, globes, &c., in honour of the king's birthday. A contemporary journalist writes:—"A curtain which covered the base of the mountain presently rose, and disclosed Vulcan leading Cyclops to work at their forge; the fire blazed, and Venus entered with Cupid at her side, who begged them to make for her son those arrows which are said to be the causes of love in the human breast: they assented, and the mountain immediately appeared in eruption with lava rushing down the precipices."

It was to witness Torre's fireworks that Dr. Johnson on a special occasion visited Marylebone Gardens in company with his friend Mr. George Steevens, and assumed, as Steevens relates, "a character in which perhaps even Mr. Boswell never saw him." The night had proved showery, and but few visitors were present; public notice was given, therefore, that the fireworks being injured by the rain, the usual exhibition could not take place. The doctor waxed indignant. "This is a mere excuse," he observed to his friend, "to save

their crackers for a more profitable company. Let us both hold upon sticks and threaten to break those coloured lamps that surround the orchestra, and we shall soon have our wishes gratified. The core of the fireworks cannot be injured; let the different pieces be touched in their respective centres, and they will do their offices as well as ever." Some young men who overheard him immediately commenced the violent proceedings he had recommended, and attempt was made to fire some of the wheels which appeared the least damaged by the rain; these efforts proved in vain, however, the fireworks would not explode. Mr. Steevens notes: "The author of 'The Rambler' may be considered on this occasion as the ring-leader of a successful riot, although not as a skilful pyrotechnist."

Some few years later the gardens were devoted to "a representation of the boulevards of Paris." Temporary shops were erected in front of the ball-room; the names of the supposititious tradesmen being made legible "by means of transparent paintings:" Tête, a hairdresser; New-fangle, a milliner; Crotchet, a music shop; Pine, a fruiterer; Trinket, a toy-shop, &c., much in the manner of a harlequinade. There were other entertainments, among them the feats of eight acrobats, who "exhibited a dance called 'The Egyptian Pyramids,' standing on the backs, arms, and shoulders of each other to an astonishing

height." In 1776, Bonnel Thornton's burlesque ode was successfully performed in the gardens. It resembled in some sort the 'Toy Symphony of Haydn,' and was entitled "An Ode on Saint Cecilia's Day, adapted to the ancient British music, viz., 'The Salt Box,' 'The Jew's Harp,' 'The Marrow-bones and Cleavers,' 'The Hurdy-gurdy,'" &c. The music was composed by Dr. Burney. In a mock preface the author expressed a desire "to lessen our false taste in admiring that foreign music now so much in vogue." The odes of Dryden and Pope had been unhappily adapted to the common instruments which ignorance and false taste had introduced amongst us. The author hoped that whatever opinion the audience might entertain of his ode, they would at least commend his endeavours to bring again into notice certain long neglected but noble instruments of music.

Upon the stage of a small theatre in the gardens burlettas were presented: among other works 'The Portrait,' an adaptation of 'Le Tableau Parlant,' by George Colman, and 'The Revenge,' a burlesque written by Chatterton at the age of sixteen. Handel's 'Acis and Galatea' was also performed; lectures were occasionally given with entertainments of conjuring and mimicry, and exhibitions of the Fantoccini. The gardens were finally closed in 1778, and buildings speedily covered the site. The principal entrance had

been in High Street, and the visitor could approach by a foot-path from Cavendish Square; there also was a back entrance from the fields, beyond which, to the north, a narrow passage opened into what were called 'The French Gardens,' cultivated by the refugees whom the Edict of Nantes had driven from France.

Ranelagh Gardens claimed patronage because of the shelter they afforded the visitor. They professed to be a "Vauxhall under cover" for the most part, and offering attractions even in the depth of winter. No vestige of Ranelagh now remains. The road from Sloane Street to the Suspension Bridge leading to Battersea Park crosses the site of the gardens. The house, originally erected by Viscount Ranelagh, in 1691, on ground granted him by William III., had been purchased by one Timbrell, a builder, in 1733, and was shortly afterwards offered for sale as "a freehold with garden, kitchen-garden, and offices, and a smaller house and garden with fruit-trees, coach-houses," &c. In 1742 Walpole wrote of Ranelagh to his friend Sir Horace Mann: "I have been breakfasting this morning at Ranelagh Garden; they have built an immense amphitheatre with balconies full of little ale-houses; it is in rivalry to Vauxhall, and cost above twelve thousand pounds. The building is not finished, but they get great sums by people going to see it

and breakfasting in the house." On May 26th, 1742, Walpole writes again to Mann: "Two nights ago Ranelagh Gardens were opened at Chelsea; the prince, princess, duke, much nobility, and much mob besides were there. There is a vast amphitheatre finely gilt, painted, and illuminated, into which everybody that loves eating, drinking, staring, or crowding is admitted for twelve-pence. The building and disposition of the grounds cost sixteen thousand pounds. Twice a week there are to be ridottos, at guinea tickets, for which you are to have a supper and music. I was there last night, but did not find the joy of it. Vauxhall is a little better, for the garden is better, and one goes by water." A landing-place was afterwards added to Ranelagh, however, so that it might be approached by the river. The chief entrance was in Ranelagh Walk, the visitors being driven through a long avenue of majestic trees; an open space in front of the gates was sufficient to contain a great number of carriages. The rotunda or amphitheatre was one hundred and eighty-five feet in diameter, with an orchestra in the centre, and tiers of boxes all round. It was projected by Lacy, Garrick's partner in the patent of Drury Lane. The huge building was warmed in the winter time by means of coal fires; and the chief amusement consisted in promenading round and round the central orchestra, listening to the music, vocal and

instrumental, and taking refreshments in the supper-boxes. Dr. Johnson having seen Ranelagh "when the scene was enlivened with a gay profusion of colour, pronounced the spectacle, "the finest thing he had ever seen." Yet he decided that such splendid places of amusement were but "struggles for happiness." "When I first entered Ranelagh," he confessed to Boswell, "it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind such as I never experienced anywhere else. But as Xerxes wept when he viewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think: but that the thoughts of each individual there would be distressing when alone." Boswell notes profoundly: "This reflection was experimentally just."

There were difficulties with the central orchestra. It was said to destroy the symmetry of the building by projecting some twenty feet too far; it was charged also with diffusing the sounds of the music with such irregular rapidity that the harmonious articulations escaped the nicest ear when placed in the most commodious attitude." A new orchestra was therefore planned with "a well-proportioned curvature over it"—probably a sounding-board—to "contract into narrower

bounds the modulations of the voice," and "operate upon the musical sounds in the same manner as concave glasses affect the rays of light by collecting them into a focus." A stage was also erected to accommodate some thirty or forty choristers, and performances took place of admired catches and glees, "selected from the curious collection of the Catch Club; being the first of the kind publicly exhibited in this or any other kingdom." To give the catches and glees their proper effect in so large an area, choral and instrumental parts were added by the famous Dr. Arne.

For a time Ranelagh seems to have surpassed Vauxhall in the estimation of fashionable society. Walpole, a convert to the newer place of entertainment, wrote to his friend Conway in 1744: "Every night constantly I go to Ranelagh, which has totally beat Vauxhall. Nobody goes anywhere else; everybody goes there. My Lord Chesterfield is so fond of it that he says he has ordered all his letters to be directed thither." Four years later he wrote to Montagu: "Ranelagh is so crowded that going there t'other night in a string of coaches we had a stop of six-and-thirty minutes." At one time it was the vogue to remain at Ranelagh until the conclusion of the concert and the fireworks, and then to adjourn to Vauxhall for supper. The patronage of the Prince of Wales, afterwards

George the Fourth, lent the place for a time great attraction. And Ranelagh could boast its romantic incidents. It was the scene of Fighting Fitzgerald's attempt to abduct Perdita Robinson. In the gardens of Ranelagh the Prince of Wales first met the charming Mrs. Crouch, and the foolish Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, was first impressed by the beauty of the widow, Mrs. Horton, whom he subsequently made his Duchess. This union induced the Royal Marriage Act.

Almost the last event of importance in the history of Ranelagh was the installation ball of the Knights of the Bath in 1802. The gardens were finally closed in 1803, after a festival had been held to celebrate the peace with France, and the Picnic Society had given a grand breakfast to 2,000 persons, when Garnerin made an ascent in his balloon. The buildings were demolished in 1804; the organ being transferred from the magnificent rotunda to the quiet parish church of Tetbury in Gloucestershire. It may be noted that etchings by George Cruikshank of both Marylebone and Ranelagh Gardens, from contemporary drawings, appear as illustrations to Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's romance of 'The Miser's Daughter.

Bagnigge Wells does not strike one now as a particularly agreeable or picturesque place. It was much esteemed, however, in the last cen-

tury. It possessed a spa-room then, and people attended there to drink the waters. It was first opened to the public about 1757, "in consequence of the discovery of two mineral springs upon the premises—the one chalybeate, the other cathartic." A certain Doctor Bevis wrote a treatise upon these waters, proclaiming their medicinal qualities. It is likely that the majority of the visitors preferred more palatable potations, however. The place offered attractions, as yet another imitation of Vauxhall, although on an inferior scale. Nell Gwynne is said to have occupied Bagnigge Wells House at one time, and to have retained for her exclusive use the bath or well in Cold Bath Fields. Her bust remained there so late as 1791, which, "although coarsely executed, confirmed the likeness of Lely's pencil." The place is described as "one of her country houses where the King and Duke of York frequently visited, and where she often entertained them with concerts, breakfasts," &c. The river Fleet, better known, perhaps, as the Fleet Ditch, fed by the springs in the neighbourhood, ran through the grounds, and upon its banks seats were ranged, "for such of the company as choose to smoke and drink cider, ale, &c., which are not permitted in other parts of the gardens." Bagnigge Wells obtains mention in Colman's prologue to Garrick's farce of Bon 'Ton, or High Life above Stairs.'

Ah! I loves life and all the joys it yields,
Says Madame Fussock, warm from Spitalfields.
Bon Ton's the space twixt Saturday and Monday.
And riding in a one-horse chaise o'Sunday;
'Tis drinking tea in summer afternoons,
At Bagnigge Wells with china and gilt spoons—
'Tis laying by our stuffs, red cloaks and pattens,
To dance cow-tillons all in silks and satins.

The Gardens were originally extensive, and adorned in the old-fashioned way with leaden statues, straight walks, clipped trees, fountains, grottoes, &c. The water was dispensed at threepence per glass, or eightpence per gallon, delivered in the pump room. The famous Braham at the age of fourteen is said to have appeared as a singer at one of the concerts at Bagnigge Wells. In 1813, owing to the bankruptcy of the proprietor, there was a sale upon the premises. By this time the gardens were much reduced in size. Cubitt's building-yard now occupies a portion of the site. The Spa-room was at last given up to threepenny concerts. The entire structure was demolished in 1841.

Bagnigge Wells pre-deceased, by some few years only, the not less famous White Conduit House, long known in cockney pronunciation as Vite Condick 'Ouse. A modern tavern in Penton Street registers the site of the old establishment, first opened about 1735. An ancient conduit, with the look when perfect of a little white-faced cottage, formerly standing in an adjacent field, gave its name to the place. It had been constructed originally to

supply the Charter House with water, and on its face so late as 1815 could be deciphered 1641, the date of its erection, and the initials of Thomas Sutton, the founder of the Charter House. In 1744 the garden is described as "formed into several pleasing walks prettily disposed; at the end of the principal one is a painting, which serves to render it much longer in appearance than it really is, and in the middle of the garden is a round fish-pond, encompassed with a number of very genteel boxes for company, curiously cut into the hedges, and adorned with a variety of Flemish and other paintings." In later times White Conduit House possessed an orchestra in the grounds, a small theatre, and a hall of vast dimensions for balls, concerts, suppers, dinners, and public meetings. In 1826 White Conduit called itself the "New Vauxhall, Pentonville." During the excitement stirred by the first Reform Bill, and also in the course of the contested elections for the borough of Finsbury, when the Hon. "Tommy" Duncombe figured imposingly as a tribune of the people, the great hall at Pentonville became famous for political harangues and vehement discussions, vying in that regard with Copenhagen Fields, or the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand. But White Conduit was passing away as a place of public entertainment. Buildings were already encroaching upon the gardens, and their popu-

larity was ebbing fast. In 1849 White Conduit House was demolished. Warren Street, so called after one Stephen Warren, who died in 1827, and who had once owned the place, occupies a large portion of the site of the old gardens.

Cremorne Gardens, which have so recently been handed over to the builders, may be viewed as the last of London out-of-door places of entertainment. But Cremorne can boast no long history; it came late into public life. The patronage of royalty was never extended to it. It was never fashionable, although for a while it enjoyed considerable popularity. An aristocratic fête was attempted upon a social occasion in the year, 1858, when the general public was excluded, and admission could only be obtained by means of a high priced ticket, and the voucher of a patroness of distinction. But the night proved cold and rainy, and disaster befell the enterprise. With this exception the gardens had to depend solely upon the support of ordinary people; and Cremorne resumed its position as a sort of vulgar Vauxhall. The property was originally known as Chelsea Farm. Early in the eighteenth century the Earl of Huntingdon, who died in 1746, built a villa upon the estate, which changed hands rapidly. Richard, Lord Powerscourt; Hannah Sophia, Dowager Countess of Exeter; Sir Richard Lyttelton,

who married the Duchess of Bridgwater, are reputed to have owned the property in turn. To Viscount Cremorne, who became possessed of it in 1803, the estate owes the name by which it has since been known. "Anastasius" Hope afterwards purchased Cremorne, and in 1830 the mansion, which had been erected from the designs of Wyatt, became the residence of the Baron de Beringer, whose name had been notorious in connection with the Stock Exchange Hoax of 1814, for which Lord Cochrane so unjustly suffered. Cremorne was then first opened to the public as a gymnasium, but gradually acquired more and more the character of a pleasure-garden. De Beringer dying in 1845, Mr. T. B. Simpson, of the Albion Tavern, Great Russell Street, purchased the lease and opened the gardens for a regular season of Vauxhall entertainments. The grounds, twelve acres in extent, were skilfully laid out; a theatre was built for the performance of ballets and burlettas; a circus was devoted to equestrian feats; an orchestral temple was erected with a circular "monstre platform" for open-air dancing; a ball-room was also available when the weather proved unpropitious. The Thames, too, was pressed into the service of the gardens, and naval fêtes, in which the river steamboats took part, were occasionally given. A female Blondin crossed the river upon a tight-rope; an Italian Salamander or fire-king disported

himself in a flame-proof dress in the midst of a bonfire; balloon ascents were frequent with occasional descents in parachutes—one De Groof, a Belgian, losing his life by such means in 1874; and fireworks abounded. But Cremorne too closely resembled Vauxhall in its decadence. The gardens closed at last, not from deficiency of patronage, but because of the boisterousness and disrepute of the patrons. And a neighbourhood had grown up, environing Cremorne, and proclaiming it a nuisance. So it had to be abolished and built over.

Other like places had already departed: Rosemary Branch Gardens at Hoxton, and Rosemary Branch Gardens at Peckham; New Globe Gardens at Mile-End, and St. Helena Tea Gardens at Deptford; Tea Gardens at Bayswater, open so late as 1834; and Highbury Barn, long a popular suburban resort. All had imitated the admired Vauxhall pattern, proffering the visitor the delights of coloured lamps and supper-boxes, music, singing, and dancing, fireworks, and gravelled walks, with occasional balloon ascents, feats of horsemanship, trained dogs, ground and lofty tumbling, &c. But the same fate waited upon all. Each in turn gave offence to licensing magistrates, or was eventually "required for building purposes." The builder's reforming hand reached even so far as Anerley; and what were once popular gardens upon the banks of the old Surrey

Canal, under the shadow of the hills of Norwood and Sydenham, were converted ten years since into villa residences, streets, and terraces. The tea-gardens of old have been gradually disappearing on all sides of London; our open-air places of amusement have departed one by one. Formerly, those who contemplated taking their ease in an inn or tavern, counted also upon the pleasures of its bowling-green or its dry skittle-ground, with adjoining arbours of trellis-work, clothed with scarlet runners, 'neath whose shelter tea could be sipped, or perhaps more frequently ale-glasses emptied and pipes smoked. All the public-houses lining the roads leading to London had been wont to regard their forecourts and back-gardens as pleasure-grounds, to fit them with arbours, and adorn them with flowers and walks and grass plots, possibly even fountains. But tastes change, and habits and customs vary and develop. The open-air it seems has lost its charm. The publican has enlarged his buildings, pressing every spare inch of ground into the service of a grand bar with many compartments, lofty ceilings, and spacious counters, highly decorated with varnish and gilding, pewter and plate glass, coloured liqueurs in clear glass bottles, and numberless jets of gas. In lieu of the old tea-gardens, often harmless enough, and even wholesome, in that something like fresh air sometimes blew about

them, there flourish and flash and flare now-a-days the gorgeous and gaseous gin-palaces, wherein the visitor must drink deep and often —he can stay upon no other terms—or the malodorous music-halls, with their unseemly dances and gross songs.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRIZE COMEDY.

It was generally held that Mr. Benjamin Webster was doing a very liberal thing when, in 1843, as manager of the Haymarket Theatre, he offered a prize of five hundred pounds, "with contingent advantages," for a new and original English comedy. For some time the drama had been at a low ebb; successful plays were not forthcoming; it was urged that authors of capacity were not encouraged to write; they were tendered such poor prices for their compositions, the managers had become so niggard and so unenterprising. And then the stage was deluged with translations and adaptations from the French; for native talent there seemed no room, the original producer stood no chance. As Mr. Boucicault has stated of late years in an autobiographical letter to Mr. Charles Reade: "I was a beginner in 1841, and received for my comedy, 'London Assurance,' three hundred pounds. Three years later I offered a new play to a principal London

theatre. The manager offered me one hundred pounds for it. In reply to my objection he remarked: 'I can go to Paris and select a first-class comedy; having seen it performed I feel certain of its effect. To get this comedy translated will cost me twenty-five pounds. Why should I give you three hundred or five hundred pounds for your comedy, of the success of which I cannot feel so assured?' The argument was unanswerable, and the result inevitable. I sold a work for one hundred pounds that took me six months' hard work to compose, and accepted a commission to translate three French plays at fifty pounds apiece." It was a complaint at this time, and for some years afterwards, that dramatists, in comparison with novelists, were but poorly rewarded for their labours. Mr. Wilkie Collins discussed the subject in one of the earlier volumes of 'Household Words,' and afterwards reprinted his paper in the first edition of the work called 'My Miscellanies.' But the whirligig of time has reversed the order of things upon which Mr. Collins expressed himself, and has given the dramatist ample revenge. He no longer needs to be condoled with touching the smallness of his profits. Nowadays the writing, or even the adapting, of a play is a far more remunerative occupation than is the writing of novels. What with his London, provincial, and American rights, his receipts "by the

run," and the innumerable representations of his work, the producer of a successful drama is as the inheritor of a fortune; while that old institution, the circulating library, once so esteemed and cherished, the three-volume novel now leads but a struggling sort of life, and is even threatened with absolute extinction. From later issues of 'My Miscellanies,' Mr. Collins has excluded the paper in question, finding it, however ingenious and interesting, now altogether inapposite, obsolete, and erroneous.

A committee was appointed to examine the plays sent to the Haymarket for approval, to decide upon their merits, and to award the prize. The tribunal was thought to be admirably constituted, thoroughly competent and impartial. Charles Kemble, the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays, was appointed chairman of the committee. The other members were the retired tragedian, Charles Young; Mr. E. R. Moran and Mr. Henry Ottley, critics and connoisseurs; Mr. J. C. Searle, dramatist and associate of Mr. Macready in his theatrical managements; Mr. G. P. R. James, the voluminous novelist; and the Rev. Alexander Dyce, the editor of Shakspeare, &c. The comedies were, of course, sent in anonymously. The committee were supposed to be entirely ignorant of the names of the authors upon whose works they were required to pronounce. In all ninety-

seven works were received, or four hundred and eighty-five acts! The committee had an arduous task before them.

In a letter to Douglas Jerrold, dated 13th June, 1843, Charles Dickens writes very humorously on the subject of Mr. Webster's prize of five hundred pounds. Jerrold, jestingly, had credited his friend with an intention to abandon his novel of 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' upon which he was then engaged, and to compete for the reward. "Yes," replies Dickens, "you have anticipated my occupation. Chuzzlewit be d——d! High comedy and five hundred pounds are the only matters I can think of. I call it 'The One Thing Needful; or, A Part is Better than the Whole.' Here are the characters:

Old Febrile	Mr. FARREN.
Young Febrile (his son)	Mr. HOWE.
Jack Hessians (his friend)	Mr. W. LACY.
Chalks (a landlord)	Mr. GOUGH.
Hon. Harry Staggers	Mr. MELLON.
Sir Thomas Tip	Mr. BUCKSTONE.
Swig	Mr. WEBSTER.
The Duke of Leeds	Mr. COUTTS.
Sir Smivin Growler	Mr. MACREADY.
Servants, Gamblers, Visitors, etc. ...	
Mrs. Febrile	Mrs. GALLOT.
Lady Tip	Mrs. HUMBY.
Mrs. Sour	Mrs. W. CLIFFORD.
Fanny	Miss A. SMITH.

"One scene," he continues, with an eye to certain of the stage tricks and peculiarities of Mr. Farren, "where Old Febrile tickles Lady Tip in the ribs, and afterwards dances out with his hands behind him, his stick before,

and his eye on the pit, I expect will bring the house down. There is also another point where Old Febrile, at the conclusion of his disclosure to Swig, rises and says; 'And now, Swig, tell me, have I acted well?' And Swig says: 'Well, Mr. Febrile, have you ever acted ill?' Which will carry off the piece!"

He discusses Herne Bay, whither Jerrold has retreated, and the hideous horrible misery of London in a cold wet June, and then resumes: "But I have my comedy to fly to—my only comfort. I walk up and down the street at the back of the theatre every night and peep in at the green-room window, thinking of the time when 'Dick—ins!' will be called for by excited hundreds, and won't come till Mr. Webster (half Swig and half himself) shall enter from his dressing-room, and, quelling the tempest with a smile, beseech that wizard, if he be in the house (here he looks up at my box), to accept the congratulations of the audience, and indulge them with a sight of the man who has got five hundred pounds in money, and it is impossible to say how much in laurels. Then I shall come forward and bow once, twice, thrice—roars of approbation—brayvo, brarvo—hooray, hoorar, hooroar—one cheer more; and, asking Webster home to supper, shall declare eternal friendship for that public-spirited individual. I am always, my dear

Jerrold, faithfully your friend, 'The Congreve of the Nineteenth Century' (which I mean to be called in the Sunday papers)."

A postscript was added: "I shall dedicate it to Webster, beginning: 'My dear Sir,—When you first proposed to stimulate the slumbering dramatic talent of England, I assure you I had not the least idea,' etc. etc."

It need hardly be said that Dickens's comedy, 'The One Thing Needful,' with its precise cast of characters, and the curious specimens of its dialogue and stage business, existed only in his own jocose and satirical imagination. He had accurately described, however, the kind of comedy that was likely or certain to be submitted from various quarters to the examination of the committee. It is doubtful now whether he designed the Mr. Macready of his cast to be recognised as the famous tragedian of that time, or whether he did not rather refer to a very subordinate actor of the same name, who, on that account it was said, and to occasion some annoyance to the real and genuine Mr. Macready, had been specially engaged at the Haymarket, and nightly entrusted with very humble duties upon its stage. Whether Jerrold was himself a competitor for the prize has not been disclosed. He may well have been, for he had often been content to receive a very inferior sum to five hundred pounds as the price of one of his plays.

Presently the committee decided in favour of a comedy entitled 'Quid or Quo; or, The Day of Dupes,' and this was found to be the work of Mrs. Charles Gore, who then enjoyed considerable popularity as a novelist, and was known to have contributed to the stage one or two dramas of minor note, adaptations from the French. At a later date Thackeray satirised the lady in *Punch*: one of his 'Novels by Eminent Hands'—'Lords and Liveries,' by the authoress of 'Dukes and Déjeûners,' 'Hearts and Diamonds,' 'Marchionesses and Milliners,' etc.—ingeniously mimicked the romances of high society and fashionable life with which she was wont to keep the circulating libraries well supplied. Mrs. Gore's writings pleased a large class, however, and in regard to wit and liveliness possessed undoubted merit. Her 'Cecil; or, The Memoirs of a Coxcomb'—Beckford, of Fonthill, was said to have helped her to the classical quotations and allusions with which the book is adorned—can afford comparison with the best novels of the dandy class, the school of the authors of 'Pelham' and the 'Young Duke.'

The winner of the prize had many difficulties to encounter. Public expectations had been greatly excited; too much was hoped from the prize comedy. And then the ninety-six disappointed candidates had to be taken into account. Of course these formed a

strong chorus of dissentient and dissatisfied voices, impeaching the judgment of the committee, and even accusing them of unfair conduct in the matter. After all, as in her preface to the published play, Mrs. Gore reminded the public, the offer of a premium "could create no new talent among the existing dramatists of the day." And the rejected authors who combined to disparage the prize comedy had to concede that their own productions were in the unanimous judgment of the committee of even inferior merit to 'Quid pro Quo.' Mrs. Gore also held, probably with little enough warrant, that the fact of her sex operated against the prospects of her play. On this account she had hoped to preserve her anonymousness until after the first night of performance. But her handwriting was known to "a literary gentleman connected with the theatre," through whom, after the adjudgment of the prize, the secret oozed out with results the lady held to be most injurious to her play and disagreeable to herself. "For," as she wrote, "the animosity on the part of the pit and the press—the dramatic critics of the newspapers being almost without an exception rival dramatists—which succeeded in condemning the very superior plays of Joanna Baillie, Lady Dacre, and Lady Emmeline Wortley, could scarcely fail to crush any attempt of mine."

Further injury to the comedy was supposed to have resulted from the refusal of Mr. Charles Mathews and Madame Vestris to undertake the parts proposed to them by the committee, for the casting of the play seems to have been within the function of that body, and in the place of those admired performers it became necessary to assign to Mr. Buckstone and Miss Julia Bennett the task of personating Captain Sippet, "a tuft-hunter," and Lady Mary Rivers, the daughter of the Earl of Hunsdon. "But," observed Mrs. Gore, "I have the more to thank the concession of Mr. Farren, who, notwithstanding the prohibition of his physicians, kindly consented to take a secondary part rather than allow an attempt towards the revival of English comedy to lack his powerful and zealous assistance."

'Quid pro Quo' failed to please. The first performance of the prize comedy was indeed received with a storm of disapproval. Yet a brilliant audience had assembled upon the occasion. On this score Mrs. Gore had no complaint to make. "Were the boxes often filled, as I had the gratification of seeing them for the first representation of 'Quid pro Quo,' with those aristocratic and literary classes of the community who have absolutely withdrawn their patronage from the English stage for their more refined pleasure, a new order of dramatic authors would be encouraged

to write and of performers to study. But no one familiar with the nightly aspect of our theatres will deny that they are supported by a class requiring a very different species of entertainment; for whose diversion exagge. ration in writing and acting is as essential as daubing to the art of the scene-painter. Clearly Mrs. Gore had not attempted to produce a work of literary or dramatic pretence, had indeed designedly forborne any such effort; she had addressed herself to an uncultivated class, and written down to her public. "Now that professional distinctions are extinct," she continued, "and the fusion of the educated classes has smoothed the surface of society to a railroad level, a mere daguerreotypic picture of the manners of the day would afford little satisfaction to playgoers accustomed to the disproportion and caricature *established into the custom of the stage* by the exigencies of our colossal patent theatres." As a dramatist, therefore, she had attempted a broader style than had characterised her writings as a novelist. She had laboured to produce in the interest of the theatre an acting rather than a reading play, "a piece likely to provoke the greatest mirth of the greatest number, and reward by overflowing audiences the spirited liberality of the manager." Unfortunately the public were not taken into the dramatist's confidence. Expectation prevailed that instead of "a bustling

play of the Farquhar or George Colman school," the prize-drama would prove to be "what is termed a high-life comedy, a style of piece which the experience of the last twenty years has proved to be wholly ineffective on the modern stage." And certainly this expectation was encouraged by the prologue, delivered by Mr. Webster, in which the comedy was described as representing "life as it is and manners as they go." The old stock plays, made up of tie-wigs, stiff brocades, and trite moralities, were obsolete, it was urged:

> "To-night our cost and care,
> Would picture English manners as they are;
> Be yours the kind requital of our task,
> A patient audience is the boon we ask," etc. etc.

But assuredly the comedy of 'Quid pro Quo' pictured life and manner most farcically and absurdly.

The scene is laid at Hunsdon Castle and in its neighbourhood. The Earl of Hunsdon, represented by the actor familiarly known as "Tom Stewart," and long connected with the Haymarket and Adelphi, is described in the playbill as "a retired statesman;" but he says of himself that he has been simply jockeyed by his colleagues out of a seat in the cabinet. His vote in the Lords and his family borough were insufficient to keep him in office, but by wresting from the Opposition the borough of Oldfield and one of the seats for his county, he hopes to double his claims to power, and

even possess himself of the blue riband. The sixth, seventh, and eighth Earls of Hunsdon had worn the garter. Why should not the ninth earl do likewise? "Political influence, you know," his lordship observes to his lawyer and agent, Cogit, "is a question of two and two make four." Cogit notes: "Simple addition! I always fancied it a matter of division." With this view Hunsdon Castle has become the scene of great festivity and princely hospitality; oxen are roasted whole, blankets are given to the poor; Lady Hunsdon receives the whole country as her guest, gives brilliant fêtes, including a series of amateur theatrical performances, and even extends her welcome to a vulgar tuft-hunting neighbour, "a retired cit," late of Gracechurch Street, stationer, but now of Hollyhock Lodge, "a staring red-brick house in the middle of a grass-plot, like a lobster garnished with parsley," who, it is proposed, shall be his lordship's candidate for the borough of Oldfield. Lady Hunsdon is described as a dear fanciful creature, who brings down to the country some new craze every season from town: "the last new folly in vogue, guano, the polka, the unknown tongues, teetotalism, capering or vapouring for the million, mesmerism, hydropathy." Captain Sippet, a toady and hanger-on of the Hunsdons, for ever employed in carrying her ladyship's lapdog, and accomplishing like inferior offices,

describes her as "turned decidedly blue," and explains that "in fashionable parlance a 'blue' means any literary lady who is not deep 'read.'" Lady Mary Rivers is the only daughter of the Earl and Countess of Hunsdon, and Lord Bellamont, an Eton boy of fourteen, "a diamond edition of the slang dictionary, a monkey miniature of man," dressed in "the extreme of the slang fashion," is their only son. This part was represented by the admired Mrs. Nisbett, but with incomplete success. The great abilities of the actress could not be displayed to advantage in the character of Lord Bellamont; she was accustomed to appear as the fine ladies and dashing coquettes of comedy, and without doubt her personation of the slangy school-boy considerably increased the farcical tendency of the play. Mr. Farren represented Sir George Mordent, described as "kinsman to the Earl," a critical and philosophical personage whose chief occupation is to comment upon the proceedings of the other characters, and to denounce their speeches as "clap-trap," that catchword being made available in almost every scene, and at every possible opportunity.

Mr. Jeremy Grigson, the retired stationer, and his wife, personated by the excellent artists, Mr. Strickland and Mrs. Glover, supply the work with its low-comedy element, but are purely conventional characters. Mr.

Grigson has his catchword, and is continually required to observe: "Mrs. G., you're a wag!" He is a vulgar tradesman, who cringes before his social superiors, is much shocked at his wife's want of manners, aspires to the representation in Parliament of the borough of Oldfield, and aims to find a husband for his daughter Ellen among the fine gentlemen at Hunsdon Castle. Mrs. Grigson is distressed by her lord's ambition: "It will bring," as she says, "her grey hairs in sorrow to a wig;" she looks back regretfully upon "the pleasant cheerful rumble of Gracechurch Street;" dislikes Hollyhock Lodge, and declares that "the stillness of the country makes her ear sing;" and that "people must be lord and lady born to put up with such grumpy solitude."

In dramatic interest the comedy is far from strong. Such story as it sets forth is of slight constitution, is rather incoherent, and arrests attention only in a very moderate degree. Henry, a lieutenant in the Navy, and the nephew of Jeremy Grigson, has returned to England after an absence of three years with his ship on the India station. He has returned in the hope of marrying his cousin Ellen and securing her fortune of forty thousand pounds, but, learning that his uncle is much opposed to this project, he is persuaded by his aunt, Mrs. Grigson, to assume the name of his messmate, Lord Algernon

Fitz-Urse, and for a while to pass himself off as that young nobleman. It is thought that Mr. Grigson will not recognise his nephew, and will welcome the pretended Lord Algernon as a suitor for the hand of Ellen, "snapping him up as a gudgeon does a worm." Henry assumes very fashionable clothes, Mrs. Grigson declaring him to be "the very moral of that little hop-o'-my-thumb, young Bellamont, magnified in an aromatic microscope;" he is most obsequiously received by his uncle and introduced to Lady Hunsdon, who pronounces him "the perfection of a tiger," and carries him off to Hunsdon Castle to take part in her amateur theatricals. At the Castle, Henry forgets his cousin Ellen and falls in love with Lady Mary. To Ellen this is of small consequence, for she cares nothing for Henry, having bestowed her affections upon a mysterious youth named Rivers, who proves to be the cousin of Sir George Mordent, and another "kinsman to the Earl." Rivers is also carried to the Castle, a notion prevailing that he has been engaged as a singer to appear with the amateurs. The humours of private theatricals are exhibited, and some portion of a Spanish comedy of intrigue are presented upon a drawing-room stage, Lord Bellamont appearing in the costume of a court page, and making the most of his part. Then there arise certain complications because of the private understanding

subsisting between Henry, the pretended Lord Algernon, and his aunt, Mrs. Grigson, which rouses the furious jealousy of Jeremy Grigson. A report is spread that the real Lord Algernon has returned from India without leave, after mortally wounding a brother officer in a duel, and that a warrant has been issued for his apprehension upon a charge of murder; Henry is thus induced to throw off his disguise and unfold himself. The play concludes with the pairing of Henry and Lady Mary, of Rivers and Ellen, and with the political discomfiture of Lord Hunsdon and Jeremy Grigson, for while they have been otherwise occupied, Cogit, the lawyer, has been quietly canvassing, and has secured his own return for the borough of Oldfield. Mrs. Nisbett, still as Lord Bellamont, delivered the epilogue, descriptive of an Eton boy's prospects and aspirations:

"To-day school's up! We've done with stale old Ilion;
Learning is now mere physic for the million.
Even the fifth form has cut both sage and poet;
We all are out, and all our mothers know it!
London, dear London, with its thousand charms,
Smiles in my face and courts me to its arms!
What if I try the Household's bright brigade?
Dazzle at levées, conquer—on parade—
Astound the park, prate about "one of us,"
And swell the Bravos of the Omnibus?
Victim to starch—to all the sex a Nero—
My tiger's prey, my valet's slave—and hero!
At Epsom, Ascot, Newmarket, of course,
Eager to stake my kingdom for a horse!
Or, when at Cowes our modern Nelsons anchor,
And furl with snow-white hands the jib and spanker
To brave, amid the gallant R. Y. C.s,
Three tedious weeks, the bottle and the breeze!"

Then followed a curious allusion to the author of 'Coningsby,' as the leader of the 'Young England party.' Mr. Disraeli was then member for Shrewsbury:

> "Or what if, sobered, cash and courage spent,
> I vex the drowsy ear of Parliament?
> My empty head with streaming locks supplied—
> Locks—et præterea nihil—Young England's pride!
> On sugar-duties show my vote invincible,
> And stun them with 'the voluntary principle'?"

'Quid pro Quo' was written with some smartness if with inferior taste. The dialogue was of the pert and punning sort, with here and there approaches to wit and humour, and oftentimes a declension into mere vulgarity. The work was not designed to be read; it did not offer any temptation to readers; on the stage it did not succeed, although Mrs. Gore claimed that her play, condemned and in a great measure unheard at its production, was afterwards repeated with "a result as brilliantly successful as the first ordeal was vexatious." Like 'The Rivals,' as she urged, "unfortunate in a first representation, it now succeeds in drawing crowded houses and eliciting the hearty laughter so welcome to the ears of the performer." But this seeming prosperity did not endure. No doubt the public were for a while curious on the subject. and the manager did all he could to promote the interest of the comedy and to retain it upon his stage. 'Quid pro Quo' was played

for some five weeks therefore, but to audiences that gradually diminished and departed, and its final representation was at length announced. So the prize comedy vanished from the stage to which it has never since been invited to return.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COLUMBINE QUESTION.

In the year 1810 there was riot, almost revolution indeed, at the Surrey Theatre. The establishment had but lately acquired that title at the hands of Elliston, its manager; for years it had been known as the Royal Circus, and devoted to exhibitions of horse-riding, feats of strength, and agility. Elliston designed its conversion to better uses. He was an exile from Drury-lane; Charles Lamb, likening him and his fallen state to a real imperial monarch in misfortune, described the Olympic as his Elba. In that case the Surrey Theatre was his St. Helena.

But what induced the rising of the dwellers in St. George's-fields against their manager? In what had he offended them? Well, he had produced a Christmas pantomime, and, desirous that spirit, liberality, and enterprise should distinguish his direction of the Surrey Theatre, he had secured the services of, and introduced to his audience, two columbines. Lambeth resented the innovation; and wrath and violence prevailed in the neighbourhood.

It was not so much that he had trespassed against the prescriptions of pantomime. The two columbines, be it understood, did not appear upon the same evening. The ladies shared the part, assuming it alternately. But then each had her admirers, her adherents, and supporters; and the presence of one columbine upon the stage involved the absence from it of the other. Hence the heroine who chanced to adorn the scene, if applauded by her friends, was not the less, but rather the more, assured of being hissed by the followers of her rival. By a section of the spectators each dancer was in turn viewed as a usurper of dignities and graces of a truth the possessions of another—as a counterfeit columbine, a creature of inferior quality, endeavouring to obtain currency and acceptance to the prejudice of lawfulness and right. Much commotion and angry turmoil ensued.

The first columbine was a Miss Giroux, a sparkling brunette, young, graceful, intelligent, and of foreign origin, the daughter, it was stated, of Gabriel Giroux, a ballet master, and chief dancer of the opera houses of Paris and London. She had been received with extraordinary applause when she first appeared upon the Surrey stage. Her personification of the part was pronounced to be most admirable by a numerous body of Mr. Elliston's friends and patrons.

Miss Taylor was also a member of the com-

pany: a beautiful blonde, of sylphide proportions, with golden hair and blush-rose cheeks, a dancer of singular skill. Elliston saw no reason why blonde and brunette should not by turns occupy his stage. There was need for neither to yield the prize; like old Timotheus and St. Cecilia, they might "both divide the crown." Columbine might one night appear with a complexion of peach-blossom, and the next with a skin of olive darkness. Why not? The manager's will was law. His instructions were carried out strictly, and one night Miss Taylor danced as columbine in the place of Miss Giroux. But Mr. Elliston had reckoned without his audience.

The friends of Miss Giroux flocked to the theatre, and secured possession of the best positions in pit, boxes, and gallery. No sooner did the new columbine present herself upon the scene, than she was greeted with cries of "Off, off!" with loud demands for "Giroux! Giroux!" For the moment the adherents of Miss Taylor were taken by surprise; they were unprepared for so violent a demonstration, and they were outnumbered by their opponents. But soon they were roused to the combat; they rallied round the offended dancer, and raising the watch-cry of "Taylor!" sought to outroar the riotous Girouxites, to drown their great uproar in a still greater. Then followed insulting gestures, angry words, and at last blows. The

pit was divided as by a civil war; the strife raged long and fiercely. "The very building was shaken to its base," records the biographer of Elliston. "The opposing parties sprang on the benches and crowded on the parapets of the boxes, giving the clearest indication that they were prepared for any result." Then Elliston presented himself to the audience, and endeavoured to make a speech. He was always of opinion that much, very much, could be accomplished by means of a speech; that it was a panacea in all managerial emergencies; and he greatly praised himself upon his oratorical gifts and graces. But upon this occasion, if he even obtained a hearing, he failed to re-establish peace and good-humour. "The honeyed words of Ulysses were here of no avail. Like the Pythian responses, his words were ambiguous, and his promises unsatisfactory. Still more exasperated were both parties, and the curtain fell amidst universal confusion." Indeed, the manager was in a position of some difficulty. How could he appease an audience that would not be content with things as they were, nor with the withdrawal from the performance of both or either of the dancers? There was embarrassment confronting him, let him turn whichever way he would.

On the following night the disturbance was renewed with even an increase of violence. The admirers of Miss Taylor attended

with reinforcements. Eagerness for the fray was exhibited upon both sides; and now leaders were chosen by the rival forces, to conduct them to victory or defeat, as the case might be. One Thomas Barratt headed the Taylorites; the Girouxites placed themselves under the direction of a certain Michael Slater. The prescriptions of the great O.P. riot were mimicked. The admirers of Miss Giroux displayed her initial G; a giant T appeared on the hats of Miss Taylor's friends. Night after night hostilities were carried on with equal violence and improving method. As each lady arrived in her hackney-coach at the stage-door, she was received with the uproarious cheers of her partisans. As at a borough election, the public-houses of the precinct seemed to choose sides in quarrel, to espouse the cause and to display the colours of one or other of the two columbines. "Placards, handbills, pasquinades, and acrostics were in merry circulation, while an itinerant song, founded on The Rival Queens, collected a roaring auditory around the Obelisk." Miss Giroux even found it necessary to address the public in her own name, and on her own behalf. Her manifesto was as follows:

"SURREY THEATRE.

"Miss Giroux, deeply deploring the display of a spirit in this theatre which, however

flattering, is by no means calculated to serve her, who is the object of it, presumes publicly to declare that she has neither personally nor otherwise encouraged any hostility to the professional pretensions of a young person called Taylor; nor has she acted in any way which might tend to lower herself from her high elevation in public opinion.

"Miss Giroux takes the liberty to request that the enlightened portion of the British public which does her the honour to approve her performances, will add to so proud a distinction, the favour of abstaining from all unseemly contest, nor

"'Mixed with hired slaves, bravos, and common stabbers;'

but allow, at once, Mind to triumph over Matter.

"N.B. Miss Giroux is not aware that in this generous nation it is disreputable to be either a Jew or a foreigner; but attempts having been made to fix on her the stigma of both, she hopes it will not be deemed impertinent to state that she is neither. Miss Giroux is by no means a Jew, and has the happiness, moreover, of being born an English young lady."

Meanwhile, surprise was felt at the inactivity of the manager, who was not a man wont to be still upon occasions of strife. The tumult continued nightly, and yet Mr. Elliston made no sign. The fact is, the disturbance

paid; the theatre was crowded, for it was felt that if one party abated its zeal, victory might forthwith be snatched by the other. But at length Mr. Elliston resolved upon interposing: he desired to be like the dignitary presiding over the tournaments, who could stay the conflict by the simple act of flinging his truncheon into the lists; or, possibly, he was of opinion that the excitement might be profitably sustained and fortified by his appearance upon the scene. So with native pomposity he informed his patrons that, deprecating the continuance of hostilities, he had constituted himself umpire, and that with a view to the restoration of peace, he would himself, upon a specified evening, "give judgment in the case." The house was very full, the audience for the moment were still; not indisposed to be mischievous, but content to wait and observe what might be the conduct of their manager. Presently he entered; very majestic of aspect, and solemnly judicial of air, yet nevertheless suffused of countenance, and indeed not altogether so sober as could be wished. "He turned towards the prompter," records a witness of the incident, "and with dignity which was positively superlative, exclaimed, 'Bring me a chair!' This demand was followed by a burst of merriment from the auditory, and when, obedient to the order, the prompter appeared, bearing in a stately arm-chair, into which the manager

sank with the severity of a Wedderburn, it was, perhaps, the most powerful stroke of burlesque ever witnessed."

But things had gone too far. The audience had been too much in earnest to submit to Mr. Elliston's mock-administration of justice. Very angry feeling had been imported into the conflict, and pacification could not proceed from the eccentric judgment pronounced by the manager. The spectators were probably the more dissatisfied in that they now felt insulted by Mr. Elliston's light and ludicrous manner of treating them and their grievances. The contest was renewed with enhanced acrimony. The benches were torn up, the chandeliers seriously damaged; and as neither force could claim a victory over the other, they made common cause, and joined in pillaging the house. The manager was at length brought to his senses; authority interfered. Certain of the more prominent rioters, including Messrs. Slater and Barratt, were arrested, and it was decided that all further litigation concerning the two columbines should be confined to legitimate tribunals of the country. The attorney-general applied to the Court of King's Bench for a rule to show cause why a criminal information should not be filed against the leaders of the fray at the Surrey Theatre. The case duly came on for trial. The two columbines and their partisans appeared before the judges—Sir

Vicary Gibbs and Lord Ellenborough. The offenders were convicted. But it was felt, no doubt, that the absurdity of the whole matter was too glaring, and that the columbines' friends could not be seriously dealt with as criminals. How the case was finally settled, the following document will disclose :—

"SURREY THEATRE.

"Whereas, a criminal information has been filed in the Court of King's Bench, against us, the undersigned, Michael D. Slater, of the parish of Lambeth, and Thomas E. Barratt, of the same place, for the part taken by us in the riotous proceedings which occurred at the Surrey Theatre, in the months of May and June last, under which we now stand convicted, and are liable to be called upon to receive judgment ; and whereas Mr. Elliston, the proprietor of the said theatre, has declined to accept any payment from us towards compensating him for the heavy expense which he has incurred, and the serious loss which he has suffered, by such riotous proceedings, but has, at our entreaty, consented to abstain from bringing us up to receive the sentence of the court, on condition :

"First—That we should make a public acknowledgement of our sorrow for such offence ; and,

"Secondly—That we should subscribe a

sum of money to the fund for the relief of the distressed Portuguese, in the following proportions:—that is, that I, Michael D. Slater, should so subscribe one hundred and five pounds; and I, Thomas E. Barratt, twenty-one pounds.

"Now, in pursuance of such conditions, we do hereby publicly express our deep and sincere contrition for such offence of which we have been guilty, as well as by the disturbance of the respectable audiences collected at the said theatre, as by the injury done to the property and profits of the proprietor; and we do declare ourselves in a high degree obliged to Mr. Elliston for the forbearance by which he has relieved us from the severe consequences which might have followed the imprudences we have committed.

"M. D. SLATER.
"25 May, 1811. "T. E. BARRATT.

"W. E. ALLEN, New Bridge-street,
"Solicitor for Prosecutor.

"SAMUEL VINES, Lincoln's-inn,
"Solicitor for the Defendant Slater."

So the great Columbine conflict was brought to an end. Clamour was silenced; and thenceforward the friends of each dancer were mute and kept the peace. Miss Taylor no longer danced to the unmusical accompaniment of

hoots and noises; and Miss Giroux was no more charged, by the illiberal and ill-natured, with being, "a Jew." Nor was she driven to the courses adopted in another case—to manifest disconnection with the Hebrew nation. The maiden name of Mrs. Bland, a very popular actress and ballad singer, of sixty years since, was Romanzini, and she was in truth of Jewish origin. But seeing that she was a great favourite with the Liverpool people, before whom her first appearance was made, and among whom were many Roman Catholics, "the mother of the vocalist, for the purpose of persuading the inhabitants of Liverpool that her daughter was not of Judah, compelled her to sit at her open window on every Saturday, occupied with needlework; and in addition to this she was usually sent by her politic parent into the public market to buy a pig! and was compelled to carry it home herself, to give further confirmation as to this desirable point. To such an extent did the mother employ this sort of evidence, that, in the instance of her daughter taking a benefit, an advertisement announced that tickets were to be had at Miss Romanzini's residence, and also at a pork butcher's, near the market."

In the dramatic essays of Hazlitt, frequent mention is made of certain Miss Dennetts—three in number—dancers for whose performances the distinguished critic

had conceived very great admiration. Indeed, he writes of the young ladies in glowing and exuberant terms, that seem scarcely becoming, his judicial position being considered, although, of course, his expressions are not to be interpreted literally, and a consciousness of hyperbole is obviously present with him even in his loftiest flights. He describes their "weaving the airy, harmonious, liquid dance," and holds that "such figures, no doubt, gave rise to the fables of ancient mythology, and might be worshipped. They revive the ideas of classic grace, life, and joy. They do not seem like taught dancers, columbines and figurantes, on an artificial stage; but come bounding forward like nymphs in vales of Arcady, or, like Italian shepherdesses, join in a lovely group of easy gracefulness, while 'vernal airs attune the trembling leaves' to their soft motions. . . . . To deny their merit or criticise their style is to be blind and dead to the felicities of art and nature. Not to feel the force of their united charm (united and yet divided, different and yet the same) is not to see the beauty of 'three red roses on a stalk,' or of the mingled hues of the rainbow, or of the halcyon's breast reflected in the stream, or the witchery of the soft blue sky, or grace in the waving of the branch of a tree, or tenderness in the bending of a flower, or liveliness in the motion of a wave of the sea. We shall not try to defend them against the

dancing-school critics," &c., and so on. There is much more of the same sort, the subject being often returned to, for a critic advancing opposite opinions had presumed to call Hazlitt to account for his excesses; and so something of a debate was carried on touching the merits of these three Miss Dennetts. Hazlitt's opponent wrote under the signature of Janus Weathercock and Vinkbooms, being in truth Thomas Griffiths Wainewright, subsequently infamous as a forger and a poisoner. If Hazlitt pretended to enthusiasm and ecstacy he did not really feel, Wainewright in his turn affected an extravagance of genteel apathy and dandified languor. There was thus a sufficient contrast between the writings of the two critics, who were both contributors to the same magazine. Hazlitt derides his rival as a Sir Piercie Shafton, a euphuist, a fine gentleman wearing diamond-rings on his fingers, antique cameos in his breast-pins, pale lemon-coloured kid gloves, and carrying cambric pocket-handkerchiefs that "breathe forth Attargul;" who runs away from vulgar places and people as from the plague; swoons at the mention of the Royal Coburg; mimics his barber's pronunciation of "Ashley's," and is afraid to trust himself at Sadler's Wells, lest his clothes should be covered with gingerbread, and spoiled with the smell of gin and tobacco. Wainewright had stated, in his fantastic way what seems to have been the

truth, that the Misses Dennetts, so admired of Hazlitt, were but dancers of the third class, accustomed to appear in very inferior places of entertainment, and somewhat vulgarised in consequence. Wainewright's contributions to the London Magazine, with all their coxcombry, won the applause of such eminent authors and critics as Lamb and De Quincey, the latter expressing warm admiration, not of the manner of his judgments upon æsthetic topics, for that "overflowed with levities and impertinence, but for the substance of his opinions in those cases where I happened to have had an opportunity of judging for myself." Even Hazlitt wrote of his critical opponent, as "his friend and correspondent," "his friend and co-adjutor of the whimsical name." There is good reason to believe, indeed, that the debate touching the merits of the Misses Dennett, for all its air of independence and earnestness, was really a matter of arrangement and premeditation between the two critics, carried out with the full consent of the proprietor of the magazine in which their cross-fire correspondence appeared. A postscript to a letter addressed by Hessey the publisher to Hazlitt contains the significant words: "I think Vinkbooms will have no objection to play his part in the controversy." Of course other matters and of a later date may here be referred to; but suspicion is nevertheless justified in regard to the genuine-

ness of the discussion regarding the Misses Dennett.

Altogether there have been, perhaps, fewer conflicts and tumults in the theatre attributable to the ballet-dancers than to other influences. The case of the two columbines stands, indeed almost alone; and, as we have seen, the difficulties then arose, less from the conduct of the ladies most concerned, than from the irrepressible zeal of their admirers. But the professors of dancing have always possessed in a remarkable degree the power of inspiring enthusiasm on their behalf, and, in such wise, constraining their followers and admirers to do very foolish things. What imbecilities have been indulged in by way of rendering homage to a Camargo, a Guimard, a Taglioni, an Ellsler, or a Duvernay! It is to be said, however, that the queens of the dance wield far less power than once they did. The stars of the ballet have declined into luminaries of inferior magnitude, and shine now with but a subdued and diminished light. What the late Mr. Lumley, during his management of the Opera House, describes as "the culminating point in the history of the ballet in England" was arrived at thirty years ago. It was as the grand feu de joie which terminates an exhibition of fireworks. "The excitement crossed the channel. Foreign papers circulated histories and descriptions of its wonders. Foreign courts received, along with

official despatches, detailed accounts of its extraordinary captivations. It was literally a European event."

This was the Pas de Quatre—the appearance in combination of the four distinguished dancers Taglioni, Carlotta Grisi, Cerito, and Lucile Grahn. The difficulties in the way of the achievement were very great. Material obstacles could be overcome by means of energy and expenditure. "When it was feared that Carlotta Grisi would not be able to leave Paris in time to rehearse and appear for the occasion, a vessel was chartered from the Steam Navigation Company to waft the sylph at a moment's notice across the channel; a special train was engaged and ready at Dover; relays of horses were in waiting to aid the flight of the danseuse, all the way from Paris to Calais." But there were perplexities of a more sentimental sort that could not be so easily disposed of. "Every twinkle of each foot in every pas had to be nicely weighed in the balance, so as to give no preponderance. Each danseuse was to shine in her own peculiar style and grace to the last stretch of perfection; but no one was to outshine the others, except in her own individual belief." Everything was at length adjusted. The rehearsals commenced—proceeded. The Pas de Quatre was advertised, the time was drawing near for its accomplishment, when Perrot, the ballet-dancer, wild and desperate,

rushed to announce that all was over—the Pas de Quatre could not be presented! The ladies could not agree as to the order of their appearance upon the scene, in the execution by each in turn of a separate pas. The place of honour, the last in such cases as in regal processions, had been ceded without overmuch hesitation to Mdlle. Taglioni. The other ladies, claiming to be equal in gifts, graces, and popularity, all desired to be last but one. No one would consent to appear before the other. "Mon dieu!" cried the ballet-master in agonised tones, "Cerito ne veut pas commencer avant Carlotta, ni Carlotta avant Cerito, et il n'y a pas moyen de les faire bouger; tout est fini!" The impresario pronounced judgment with the wisdom of a Solomon. "The question of talent must be decided by the public. But in this dilemma there is one point on which I am sure the ladies will be frank. Let the eldest take her indisputable right to the envied position!" The ladies tittered, blushed, laughed, and drew back. The danseuse is always sensitive on the subject of age. Each was now as disinclined towards the right of position as she had formerly been eager for it. The matter was left in M. Perrot's hands, who had little difficulty in arranging terms of peace: and the famous Pas de Quatre was in due course exhibited to the patrons of the Opera Houses much to their delight if not their edification.

CHAPTER XIV.

"ADMIT TWO TO THE BOXES."

CHARLES DICKENS has related how he was once present at a social discussion, originated by chance, as to what was the most absorbing and longest-lived passion in the human breast? What, it was asked, was the passion so powerful that it would almost induce the generous to be mean, the careless to be cautious, the guileless to be deeply designing, and the dove to emulate the serpent? An answer, we are told, was furnished by a gentleman of vast experience and acuteness, an editor of a daily newspaper, who was one of the company, and who surprised all by stating with the utmost confidence that the passion in question was, "the passion for getting orders for the play."

The earliest entertainments of the stage were in the nature of street exhibitions, and the spectators who desired to avoid paying for the pleasure thus afforded them had but to walk or look in an opposite direction when the hat came round for contributions towards the reward of the performers. Clearly, there

was no occasion for "orders for the play" in the days when Thespis travelled from town to town, erecting a temporary stage upon his cart, and providing the public with dramatic representations of a rude and imperfect sort. It was not until payment at the doors was demanded, and there were doors at which to demand payment, that the desire arose to obtain "orders" or gratuitous admission by favour of the manager, his assistants and servants. Directly there was a question of paying, there appeared a public who did not want to pay, but desired to be entertained free of expense. Something like a "free list" thus became inevitable; somehow the "passion for getting orders for the play" had to be appeased and its demands complied with.

In Shakspearean times it is clear that a custom prevailed of admitting dramatic poets gratis into the theatre, not merely when their own plays were performed, but even when they had no personal interest in the representation. It must be remembered, however, that many of these poets were also players, and thus had a professional claim to free admission. Dekker, in his "Satiromastix," 1602, accuses Ben Jonson of sitting "in the gallery" during the performance of his plays, distorting his countenance at every line "to make gentlemen have an eye on him, and to make the players afraid to act their parts." And a further charge is thus conveyed:

"Beside you must forswear to venture on the stage when your play is ended and exchange courtesies and compliments with the gallants in the lords' rooms (or boxes), to make all the house rise up in arms and cry 'That's Horace! that's he! that's he! that's he that purges humours and diseases!'" Jonson, indeed, has not hesitated to satirize his own demeanour in the theatre. "We are not so officiously befriended by him," says one of the characters in the Induction to 'Cynthia's Revels,' referring to the dramatist, "as to have his presence in the tiring house to prompt us aloud, stamp at the bookholder (or prompter), swear at our properties, curse the poor tireman, rail the music out of tune, and sweat for every venial trespass we commit, as some author would." While, in the Induction to his 'Staple of News,' Jonson has clearly portrayed himself "rolling up and down like a tun" in the midst of the actors—"never did vessel or wort or wine work so . . . . a stewed poet! . . . . he doth sit like an unbraced drum with one of his heads beaten out," &c.

In all Mr. Pepys's playgoing experience, there is no record of his entering the theatre armed with an order, although he relates with some glee how, upon a certain occasion, by going first to the Duke's and afterwards to the King's Theatre, he managed to see for nothing an act of 'The School of Compliments' at one

house and an act of 'Henry IV.' at the other. In his time the spectators who left the theatre after the termination of the first act of the play were entitled to a return of the price paid for admission, and it appears that the performances did not begin precisely at the same hour at both houses. Further, Pepys relates Tom Killigrew's "way of getting to see plays when he was a boy." "He would go to the Red Bull, and when the man cried to the boys, 'Who will go and be a devil, and he shall see the play for nothing?' then would he go in and be a devil upon the stage, and so get to see the play." We may assume that Killigrew knew nothing of orders, or had no friend behind the scenes to give him admission; otherwise he would scarcely have played the part of a "super" for the sake of seeing the play.

During Garrick's management of Drury Lane, free admission to the theatre seems to have been accorded to all dramatists and men of letters of the time boasting any sort of acquaintance with him. Even upon Fitzpatrick, so severely ridiculed and castigated by Churchill in the Rosciad, the compliment of "the freedom of the playhouse" had been conferred in right of his education having given him "a taste for the *belles lettres*, more especially for dramatical writings," and because of his frequent attendance at the theatre and at the coffee-houses about Covent

Garden, particularly the Bedford. This did not restrain Fitzpatrick from figuring as the ringleader of the half price riots in 1763, when both Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres suffered seriously from the violence of the mob of malcontents. By way of retaliation Garrick wrote his 'Fibbleriad,' the hero of the poem, Fizgig, being readily identified with the absurd Fitzpatrick. Now and then the freedom of his playhouse was flung back to the manager in the most contemptuous fashion. Thus Foote, angry at the suspicion that he was to be caricatured upon the stage by Woodward as Malagene in Otway's 'Friendship in Fashion,' writes to Garrick: "If your box-keeper for the future returns my name he will cheat you of a sum not very contemptible to you, viz., five shillings." And thus Arthur Murphy, indignant and petulant because a farce of his composition had not been immediately accepted and produced at Drury Lane, returns his ticket of admission: "As I do not foresee any further occasion for this obliging passport, I am not willing to trespass too long upon your civility." Garrick replies with much dignity and good sense; "You were most extremely welcome to the tickets, or any other assistance in my power, in all your undertakings, whether serious or whimsical. If you choose to relinquish your right to the freedom of Drury Lane playhouse, you certainly do as you please. But, without the

ticket, I imagine Mr. Murphy will find the doors open to him as usual; and be it further known to you, sir, that as I thought you were above an undue influence, I never meant the ticket as the least tie upon the liberty of your pen or conversation."

This custom of according free admissions to persons distinguished in literature, art, and science, was followed by later managers, and notably by Macready, during his tenancy of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres. He notes in his diary the receipt of "many letters of acknowledgment for the freedom of the theatre," and records how a mistake was made in addressing Faraday as a knight when forwarding him a ticket of admission for Covent Garden during the season of 1837–8. "Received a note from Faraday, abjuring his claim to knighthood, thanking me for the card of admission, but returning it on account of the 'Sir,' answered him, and sent him a corrected card." At the same time, in his addresses to the public, Macready professed himself opposed alike to the general issue of orders and to "exaggerated or fallacious announcements in the playbills." When engaged, however, not as manager, but simply as a member of a company, Macready seems always to have stipulated for "the privilege of writing an order for two each night of my performance." Sometimes he further required that one of the private boxes

should be placed at his service, "when they were not let." And, with other actors, he was inconvenienced occasionally by the ill-timed applications for "orders" on the part of his friends and acquaintances. Thus he writes: "Received a note from Sally Booth, requesting orders; but, seeing Bunn in the theatre, I could not permit myself to ask for any. Wrote a note to Sally Booth and to Pemberton, excusing myself from giving the orders requested." Macready was at this time very indignant with his manager, Mr. Bunn, who was subjecting the tragedian to a course of mortification by way of bringing about the abrupt close of his engagement. Macready "would not permit himself" to ask for orders because, as appears in his diary, Mr. Bunn had just declined to provide him with pantaloons to wear in a new play, 'The Provost of Bruges.' "I was resolved to purchase none," he writes; "was very angry, and therefore very blamable." (Presumably, he wore an old pair upon the occasion.) Very soon the actor's fiery temper betrayed him into the violent conduct he afterwards lamented so unceasingly. His assault upon his manager led to the action of Bunn *v.* Macready in the Sheriff's Court, when the damages were assessed at 150*l.*

Writing from his experience as a manager, Mr. Bunn describes "the free admissions commonly called *orders*" as "the very bane of

the profession," while admitting the absolute necessity for their liberal issue. The performers always stipulated for them, nor could they be granted to a few of the leading players only, except at the risk of souring the rest of the company, and the press long claimed them as a matter of custom and privilege, and "on the score of reciprocity" for in the days of the advertisement duty it was usual for the newspapers to insert theatrical announcements simply upon payment of duty, and without other charge.* Thus it seems that in 1745 the advertisements of Drury Lane were inserted in the *General Advertiser* at a charge of three and sixpence per night or advertisement, the exact amount of the duty. But the relations existing between the stage and the press are of ancient date, and worth more particular examination.

It is clear that originally there was no question of the managers paying the newspaper-proprietors for the insertion of theatrical announcements. These were viewed as items of news; there was a struggle for priority in obtaining them, and persons bringing them to the publishing office were duly paid for their services, and were counted among the valued contributors to the journals in question.

* The advertisement duty was first imposed under Harley's administration in 1712. It was originally charged according to the number of lines, but afterwards became a fixed duty of 3*s.* 6*d.* per advertisement, reduced in 1833 to 1*s.* 6*d.* The tax was wholly abolished in 1853.

Extracts from the ledger of Henry Woodfall the publisher of the *Public Advertiser*, quoted in Andrews's 'History of British Journalism,' demonstrate that in the last century the theatres were a considerable expense to the newspapers. Amongst the items of payments are: "Playhouses, 100*l.*; Drury Lane advertisements, 64*l.* 8*s.* 6*d.*; Covent Garden ditto, 66*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.*" It appears that the papers paid 200*l.* a year to each theatre for the accounts of new plays, and were in the habit of rewarding with a shilling or half-a-crown the messenger who brought the first copy of a play-bill. Shopkeepers also paid at this time for the privilege of exhibiting play-bills in their windows or upon their counters. In 1721 the following announcement appeared in the *Daily Post*:—"The managers of Drury Lane think it proper to give notice that advertisements of their plays by their authority are published only in this paper and *The Daily Courant*,' and that the publishers of all other papers who presume to insert advertisements of the same plays can do it only by some surreptitious intelligence or hearsay, which frequently leads them to commit gross errors, as mentioning one play for another, falsely representing the parts, etc., to the misinformation of the town and the great detriment of the said theatre." *The Public Advertiser* of January 1, 1765, put forth this notice: "To prevent any mistake

in future in advertising the plays and entertainments of Drury Lane Theatre, the managers think it proper to declare that the playbills are inserted by their direction in this paper only." The Manager of Covent Garden Theatre also published a like notice.

In the eighteenth century news was a scarce and valuable commodity, and some difficulty existed in finding matter sufficient to fill the columns of the journals, their diminutive size notwithstanding. Little foreign intelligence was obtainable; there were no correspondents on the Continent, no leading articles, and the publication of parliamentary debates was prohibited. The press was subject to rigorous laws; editors, publishers, and journalists were liable upon slight provocation to the severest punishments; they worked, as it were, under the immediate shadow of the pillory. The stage had thus the advantage of being a safe subject; while the transactions of the theatre were generally interesting, both on their own account and because of the absence or the forcible suppression of other topics. Fear sat heavily upon the journals of a hundred years ago; it was necessary to allude to the Prime Minister as the P——e M——r; the Secretary of the Treasury figured in print as the S——y of the T——y; while the bankrupts of the time were enumerated in a list delicately headed B——pts. There must have been something of comfort in the

frank mention of Mr. Garrick's name and in open reference to proceedings at Drury Lane and Covent Garden. As late as 1752 the editor of the *Leicester Journal*—printed in London, for printing-presses were rare in the provinces in those days—found news so difficult to obtain, that he was induced to fill his columns with a reprint of the Bible in weekly portions! And certainly, the art and the economy of advertising were little understood in the last century. Not merely were the managers paid for their announcements, but during the general election of 1774 some of the papers declined printing the separate addresses of the candidates, lest injustice should be done to their readers by undue encroachment upon the space usually devoted to news. Charges for publication, a revenue arising from advertisements, enlargements, supplements and double supplements, were things that as yet stood not within the prospect of belief—were, indeed, altogether undreamt of.

As the press increased in importance, it ceased to pay the managers for dramatic news: it obtained a sufficiency of other intelligence; and now its good opinion became of value to the theatres, and its insertion of theatrical announcements gratuitously, or upon payment of the duty merely, was held to entitle it to "reciprocity," as Mr. Bunn calls it. The proprietors or the editors of newspapers were privileged to write orders admitting two to

the boxes nightly. With the increase of newspapers came the increase of orders, until there seemed quite an army of persons claiming free admission to the theatre. The inconvenience of this became especially evident when an attractive exhibition was offered, and when there was no lack of visitors willing to pay for their entertainment; for though it was usual to suspend the ordinary "free list" upon such occasions, it was understood that exception must always be made in favour of "the public press." In 1852 Mr. Albert Smith, occupying the large room at the Egyptian Hall with his popular entertainment of "Mont Blanc," forcibly expressed managerial discontent on the subject. He wrote:—"It is perfectly impossible to give any further accommodation to the shower of newspaper admissions that flow into my room every evening. The hall holds about 430 persons; of these there are seats for 90 in stalls, 160 in the area, and 180 in the gallery. Were the whole of the newspapers claiming a right to admission to send in their orders early in the evening, they would monopolise every seat!" Mr. Webster, then tenant of the Haymarket and Adelphi theatres, in support of Mr. Albert Smith's protest, published a statistical account of the number of free admissions issued by the London newspapers in the years 1850, 1851, 1852, and presented at the doors of the establishments under his direction. It will be

sufficient to state in round numbers the results of Mr. Webster's calculations. During the three years mentioned, the newspapers, some fifty in number, had obtained the admission of upwards of 70,000 persons to the Theatres Royal Haymarket and Adelphi. The value in money of these orders, according to the usual tariff of admission, was over £16,000. Mr. Charles Mathews, then manager of the Lyceum, also joined in the discussion, alleging that his theatre had suffered to the extent of £25 per night, or at the rate of £75,000 a year, from the admission of "press orders." Further, a claim was urged on the part of the theatres for more liberal treatment, for a new measure of "reciprocity," at the hands of the press. It was charged that notwithstanding the generosity of the managers in regard to the admission of "press orders," sundry dramatic critics, the representatives of particular newspapers, had ventured to write unfavourably of the performances they had undertaken to review. Orders were thought to be not merely "press privileges," but also the prices paid to the newspapers for "favourable notices!" Mr. Mathews wrote letters to the papers, and even published statements of rather extravagant character in his play-bills, especially singling out for attack the dramatic critic of the *Morning Chronicle* Mr. Angus B. Reach, a writer of great wit and humour, possessed of a bright and incisive style, who had criticised

with some severity the entertainments presented at the Lyceum Theatre. The discussion, which raged for some time, and to which many contributed, was subsequently recorded in a volume entitled 'Press Orders,' edited and published by Mr. Albert Smith. And as a result of this "paper war," many of the newspapers resigned their privilege of issuing orders for the theatres, and were content to receive tickets admitting their representatives to reserved seats whenever any performances were presented that seemed deserving of critical attention.

It has assuredly been unfortunate for dramatic criticism that relations of a kind likely to be misunderstood have subsisted between the theatres and the press. Mr. Charles Mathews has not been the only manager of opinion that a critic in the enjoyment of press privileges should judge with exceeding tenderness, and even with some inclination to puff, the entertainments of the stage. Mr. Macready enters in his diary: "Wrote to the editor of the *Weekly Dispatch*, striking that paper off the free list." There was no doubt special provocation in this instance. Macready had been attacked with considerable rancour, and eventually had to seek redress by means of an action at law for libel. But newspapers that ventured upon any severity of criticism were now liable to be struck off the free list by way of punishment for offending the man-

ager. At one time Macready seems to have suffered at the hands of the *Athenæum* critic. He records: "The Messrs. Dilke called and went over the affair of the *Athenæum* criticism, speaking with great candour and good nature, endeavouring to palliate the false statement of 'The Bridal's' want of attraction, and coming to a very amicable, agreeable arrangement, as settled yesterday, respecting the interchange of orders for advertisements." In the course of his career as manager, Mr. Bunn suspended the free admission of Mr. J. Payne Collier, the dramatic critic of the *Morning Chronicle*, charging him with writing a "tissue of falsehood and nonsense" concerning certain of Mr. Bunn's theatrical productions. Mr. Collier explained that, owing to his absence from ill health, the review in question had been written by a deputy, and that he was wholly unaware of the difference that had arisen between the manager and the newspaper. "Had I known it," he writes rather meekly, "I should not have run the risk of the admission I have hitherto used, and which I gave to a friend, being rejected." In later times the managers have often sought to gain "the whip hand" of the newspapers, less by threats in regard to striking them from the free list, than by intimations that all advertisements would be withdrawn if reviews of a favourable character were not systematically provided. Advertisements are of course much

prized by the press. They are not only a great source of profit; they are evidence of large circulation and prosperity, and they are convenient to the public. A journal that is less supplied than its contemporaries with advertisements seems placed at a disadvantage in their regard. "Never offend an advertiser," has become a maxim, a ruling principle, with many proprietors of newspapers. It has sometimes happened, therefore, that in deference to the complaints and the menaces of the advertising manager, the newspaper proprietor has exhorted his critic to leniency and partiality of judgment, and bidden him praise what should rather be dispraised. But of course there are many newspaper-proprietors not to be moved by managerial interference, valuing independence above advertisements; as there are many critics who would not subject their reviews to unfair influence, or indeed any dictation, on the part of newspaper proprietors.

The newspapers freely availed themselves of their privilege of issuing orders as a means of wooing the advertisers. And here we are brought back to the opinion that the most absorbing, unappeasable and longest-lived passion in the human breast, is the passion for getting orders for the play. The advertiser likes to be stimulated, or complimented, or rewarded, by the receipt of free admissions to the theatre. In an amusing paper upon "Bill-Sticking," originally published in *Household*

Words, Mr. Charles Dickens describes the bill-sticker as securing positions for his placards by his liberal distribution of orders for theatres and public exhibitions. "If there were a building," the chief of the bill-sticking craft is supposed to say, "or if there were repairs going on anywhere, you could generally stand something and make it right with the foreman of the works; but 'orders,' would be expected from you, and the man who could give the most orders was the man who would come off best. There was this other objectionable point in 'orders' that workmen sold them for drink, and often sold them to persons who were likewise troubled with the weakness of thirst; which led to the presentation of your 'orders' at theatre doors by individuals who were 'too shakery' to derive intellectual profit from the entertainments, and who brought a scandal on you." The passion for orders has been further exemplified by Mr. Dickens's story of the sailor picked up at sea—one of the very few survivors of a terrible shipwreck. Rescued, he made his way to London—to a newspaper office—and told his dreadful story to the editor. He had seen his ship go down before his eyes. He had witnessed the most terrible contention between the powers of fire and water, which should first destroy his ship and every one on board. He and a few of his mates had rowed away among the floating dying and the sinking dead. He had floated

by day and he had frozen by night, with no shelter and no food, and as he told his dismal tale he rolled his haggard eyes about the room. "When he had finished," related Mr. Dickens, "and the tale had been noted down from his lips, he was cheered and refreshed and soothed, and asked if anything could be done for him. Even within him that master passion was so strong that he immediately replied he should like an order for the play. The editor thought that was rather a strong case."

It is not only from press orders, however, that trouble and debate have arisen. In 1747 Benjamin Victor, one of the managers of the theatre Royal, Dublin, wrote to David Garrick, "one of the patentees of the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane":—"We shall be obliged to you if in your next letter you will inform us who are the persons belonging to the royal family that claim the liberty of your theatre—I mean if any, and who—every play night? We all know there are an appointed number when the king or any of the royal family goes to the house. The reason of this inquiry is to form some application to the Lord Lieutenant to redress the insupportable grievances this theatre labours under; you know it is an old custom here for Government to pay 100*l.* a year for the Governor and his court, and as the Theatre Royal is now under new management, a list has been made out (I

suppose at the secretary's office) of ninety-two persons who claim a free seat in the theatre every night, if they please to demand it." Free admissions to royalty are not now perhaps the occasion of much difficulty to managers, but as much may not be said in relation to other orders. Just as there are countries possessed of paper armies only, so there are theatres that seem greatly dependent upon paper audiences. In the eyes of the manager, an empty house is the most distressing of spectacles; rather than that, he would seek spectators in the highways and byways and compel them to come in. The audience admitted gratuitously is in the nature of a decoy; it may lure a paying public into the theatre. The appearance of the house is an evidence of success, and the success of an entertainment—even its supposititious or rumoured success—is a sure means of attraction. It has been estimated that some 30,000 orders are distributed weekly by the London managers, and that if one half of the number now entering theatres gratis were required to pay for the privilege, the theatres would collectively profit to the amount of over 150,000*l.* per annum. "To sow orders broadcast," writes one well informed on the subject, "has now become one of the most important of theatrical functions; and an "acting" manager, who has a list of persons to whom he may send orders with a certainty of their

being distributed, ranks higher than the best of actors." A manager whose origin had been humble, and who had scarcely moved among the socially distinguished, once described an acquaintance as his greatest benefactor, adding the explanation: "He gives away my private boxes to respectable people!" At the same time it is indisputable that orders are bestowed upon many both able and willing, under a different system, to pay for their seats. The gift of an order is attended with a certain demoralising effect; the recipient is thenceforward disinclined to pay for his admission, and finds an unworthy pride in his privileged state, flattering himself that he is much better off than his neighbours: he obtains for nothing what they would be required to pay considerably for. It is alleged, however, that a certain Nemesis waits upon the play-goer provided with an order. His sense of enjoyment is vitiated and numbed. The play is less pleasant seen for nothing than when properly paid for—the result of some effort to secure a place and even of some sacrifice of personal comfort. And "orders" have the reputation of being a bad and unsympathetic audience. They are said to be critical, cynical, hard to please. They undervalue the entertainment set before them; naturally—it has cost them nothing, and perhaps they have arrived at the theatre

under conditions ruffling to the temper. The orders may have reached them at the last moment, disturbing their other arrangements, including those relative to dinner and digestion. The gentleman may have had no time to make due changes in his dress; the lady may have hurriedly assumed a crumpled red opera cloak to hide the incompleteness or the unpicturesqueness of her toilet. It is not so surprising that they should survey moodily with saturnine eyes the transactions of the stage.

But this broadcast sowing of orders is not a system originating to-day. Mr. Bunn, in his book entitled 'The Stage both before and behind the Curtain,' published an "account of certain orders issued under Charles Kemble's management of Covent Garden Theatre by his treasurer, Mr. Robertson, between May 17 and July 12, 1824." It appears that during this brief period, upwards of 11,000 orders were written, to the value of nearly 4,000*l.*, or an average of 100*l.* per night; these orders, of course, being in addition to the free admissions issued by the press. Mr. Charles Kemble was appearing as Romeo, Benedick, Faulconbridge, Falstaff, Young Mirabel, to houses crowded in this artificial way. It is no such wonder that, a few years later, the management became involved in great disaster, all the property in the theatre

being seized and advertised for sale by the parochial authorities because of the nonpayment of the rates. Mr. Bunn expressed his opinion that "the indiscriminate distribution of orders was the most deceptive pivot upon which the fortunes of a theatre could possibly turn," and further, "one of the most thankless, troublesome, and injurious of the many duties devolving on the manager of a theatre." He doubted the general opinion that a given quantity of orders always brought along with it a given amount of money, holding that it never brought the amount it kept away; and, referring to the ingratitude of the recipients of orders, he relates how he once gave free admissions to his solicitor, who in the course of the evening, between the play and the farce, came behind the scenes for a few minutes' conversation, and then returned to his family in the boxes. "When his bill of costs was some time after sent in, one of the items ran thus: 'To attending you in your room at the theatre, 6*s.* 8*d.*'—the very night he and his family had entered free!"

Only a few years since, the late Mr. Charles Mathews, writing, however, as an actor, and no longer in the capacity of manager, returned to the subject of orders, complaining of the numberless applications he received for orders "'for any night most convenient to himself'

—as if any night was ever convenient!" He proceeded. "It is no exaggeration to say that, were all the requests addressed to the manager and the various members of a theatre complied with on the same night, the public would be altogether excluded from the upper portion of the house. . . . No one writes for an order to the Royal Academy! No one asks for an order from a shopkeeper for a toothbrush or a bottle of ink, for which other people have to pay a shilling! Why, then, should a place in the theatre, costing four shillings to the public, be supplied gratis to any one who chooses to ask for it?" No doubt there would be an abundance of applications for orders for the Royal Academy, or for toothbrushes or bottles of ink, if it were known that such privileges were anyhow obtainable. People ask for orders because they know that it is in the power of some to distribute them, and that they are occasionally to be obtained with little difficulty.

It is clear that by Charles Lamb orders were much cherished. Leigh Hunt, writing of his youth, when he was supplying 'The News' with reviews of the theatres, declared "that to know an actor personally appeared to him a vice not to be thought of; and," he added, "I would as lief have taken poison as accepted a ticket from the theatres." He was endeavouring to introduce independence

in theatrical criticism as "a great novelty." Until then (1807) "puffing and plenty of tickets" had been the prevailing system. "It was an interchange of amenities over the dinner-table a flathery of power on the one side, and puts on tn;e other; and what the public took for a criticism on a play was a draft upon the box-office, or reminiscences of last Thursday's salmon and lobster sauce." But Lamb, though he often wrote about the stage and was a frequent playgoer, was never formally attached to a newspaper as its recognised critic; he had no misgivings lest his fairness should be impeached or any suspicion arise concerning his distribution of praise or censure. In his early days there had been pit orders. He writes: "Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them!" The pit, in the consideration of the critical, was preferable to the boxes; from the lowlier station the actors could be seen and heard so very much better. Elia was supplied with orders, as he professed, by his godfather, who kept an oil-shop in Holborn. He was the associate of John Palmer the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; he was also known to and visited by Sheridan. "From either of these connections it may be inferred that my godfather could command an order for the then Drury Lane at pleasure; and, indeed a pretty liberal issue of those

cheap billets, in Brinsley's easy autograph, I have heard him say, was the sole remuneration which he had received for many years' nightly illumination of the orchestra and various avenues of that theatre—and he was content it should be so. The honour of Sheridan's familiarity—or supposed familiarity—was better to my godfather than money."

THE END.

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